LOUISIANA Conservationist

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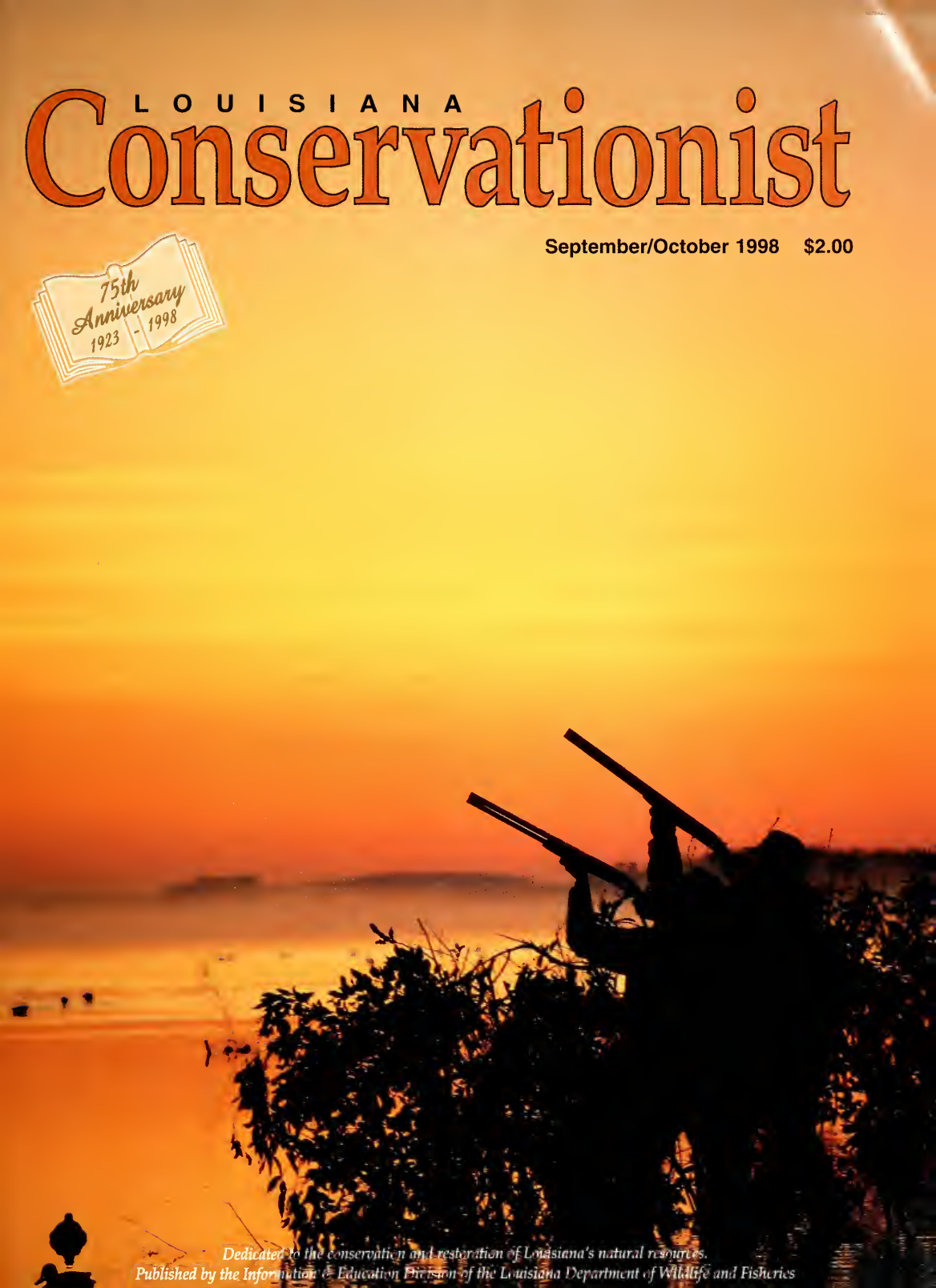

Dedicated to the conservation and restoration of Louisiana's natural resources.
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Comments

By James Patton, Undersecretary

People have started to hear the terms "performance-based budgeting" and "strategic planning" being used to describe activity in the Department. Where did this come from and what are we talking about? Continuing a process of fundamentally transforming Louisiana's budgeting process that began in 1989, Act 1465 of the 1997 Regular Session says this about performance-based budgeting: "It is the intent of the legislature that performance-based budgeting practices be established throughout Louisiana state government. The legislature recognizes the value of relating funding to expected performance in order to ensure efficiency and economy in the expenditure of state funds." So what is performance-based budgeting? Simply stated **it is budgeting that relates funding to *expected* results.** There are three factors necessary to building a performance-based budget:

1. Strategic Planning
2. Operational Planning and
3. Performance Accountability

Now you may know, in accordance with Act 1465 , the Department and Commission have recently prepared and adopted a strategic plan for the next five years. We see that the strategic planning is the first component of building a performance-based budget, but what is it? **Strategic planning is often called "planning for results".** It has also been called "a common-sense approach that helps you manage the future rather than be managed by it."

A good strategic plan will answer four basic questions about the entity:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How do we get where we want to be?
- How do we measure our progress?

Although the Department now has a strategic plan, strategic planning is a continuous process, with every budgeted program in the Department participating. Every year, each program will state its **Mission, Goal(s), Objective(s) and Strategy(ies).** In order to illustrate just what I'm talking about, let's follow the process from start to finish for part of a particular program.

ENFORCEMENT

MISSION: "The mission of the Enforcement Program is to protect Louisiana's fish and wildlife resources and their habits by enforcing related laws and regulations and to create a secure environment for the maximum enjoyment of hunting, fishing, recreational boating and affiliated outdoor activities. The clients served by this program are the citizens of the state. The program works to promote voluntary compliance and ethical participation in these

(continued on page 37)

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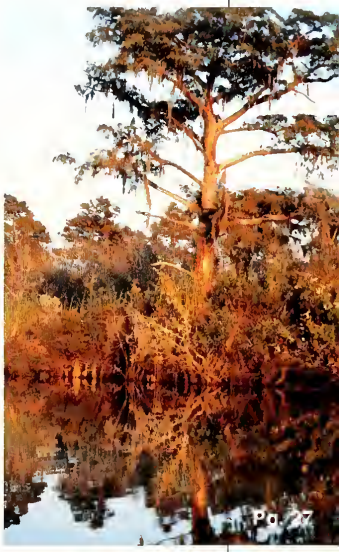

Front Cover
Duck Hunting at Dawn
by Gary Kramer

Back Cover
Alligator Season Opens
LDWF file photo

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FIRST HUNT

STORY BY DON DUBUC

Photo by Gary Parker

Four steps to making a youngster's first hunt a success.

Even if you're an avid hunter, chances are you've never considered hunting as a *lifestyle*. The thought of hunting being a major force in day-to-day living probably never crosses most hunters' minds. Yet hunting is definitely as much a state of mind as it is an activity. Days off from the job, vacations and holiday schedules and yes, even wedding dates, often hinge on hunting season dates.

Hunting is a significant aspect of American and especially Louisianian heritage. Recreational hunting is enjoyed by millions of United States citizens. It is a combination of calculation, anticipation, mental alertness and physical exertion. A typical hunting trip can produce excitement, intrigue, challenge, fulfillment and education. A true understanding of hunting gives us a better perspective of humanity's role in our environment and as part of the predatory chain.

Yet, as we approach the millennium, people are more concentrated in urban and suburban areas with limited exposure to nature. For many of them, fully understanding the value and validity of hunting is difficult. Consequently, they never embrace hunting as a lifestyle or even as an occasional pastime.

Youngsters who grew up in families that have traditionally hunted have a greater tendency to succumb to the allure of hunting for a lifetime. Similarly, children who come from non-hunting families tend to adapt their lifestyles to other activities. There's certainly no shortage of participation-sport opportunities like baseball, football and soccer. Additionally, there are many other outdoor related activities like fishing, hiking and rafting competing for a youngster's time. And this doesn't include countless hours spent indoors in front of a computer monitor playing screen games or "surfing the net."

We've all heard the stories of how important first impressions can be. With so many diverse recreational opportunities present, a child's first hunt can be a crucial experience. Depending on the outcome, the first hunt can be a make-it or break-it situation. All too often there's no second chance to salvage a negative first hunt impression.

Therefore, one of the most important gifts hunters can give to interested youngsters is to ensure that a first hunt is a positive experience. Here are four steps to making that first hunt a successful one.

MAKE IT THEIR HUNT

Successful first hunts are rarely accidental. Careful planning is the key. First and foremost, hunters must plan the hunt *for the youngster*, not for themselves. Remember, this hunt will make a lasting impression for better or worse.

Be prepared to donate your time as an instructor and a mentor rather than a hunter. The entire focus should be on his or her enjoyment. Squirrel hunting is the most popular first hunt. It requires very little equipment, is usually not too physically demanding and often provides quick and frequent action.

It's very important in the planning stages to discuss how the hunt will unfold. Stories around the campfire the night before the hunt will fuel *anticipation*, an integral part of the hunt. In other words, get them "pumped up" about the coming hunt.

Equally important is to explain that making the kill is only a small part of the hunt. Assure them every hunter has been skunked at some time, so they won't be devastated should they miss or not get a shot at all.

It's a good plan to bring only one gun. This accomplishes several things. Number one, it's safer to deal with only one firearm. It also de-emphasizes the importance of the gun and shifts the focus to other skills such as searching for sign, tracking, listening for and spotting game. Lastly, it eliminates any temptation the supervisor might have to take the first shot (or the last shot) and helps him concentrate on developing the youth's hunt-

Photo by Don Dubuc

The woods are an excellent classroom for children of all ages. Recognizing animal tracks, identifying various plants and practicing firearm safety are just a few of the activities first time hunters should experience. Young hunters should also be schooled in the use of camouflage, scents and various stalking techniques and the importance of wearing hunter orange.

Photo by Don Dubuc

ing skills. Remember, this is *their* hunt!

MAKE IT SIMPLE

Whether you blame it on television programming's 30 minute formats or simply the tremendous volume of information that invades our daily lives via the media, the bottom line is kids' attention spans have never seemed shorter.

Considering the "Is that all there is, what's next?" mindset of today's youth, it's important to introduce first time hunters to short, simple trips. A two hour, moderately - paced trip is more likely to leave a young hunter with a positive feeling. More importantly, they will be more likely to make follow-up hunts.

Try to keep travel time to a minimum. If your destination is several hours away, it might be better to leave the evening before to wake up fresh and prevent fatigue from spoiling the event.

Equipment should also be kept simple. First timers rarely have all the gear required so plan a hunt that won't require specialty gear unless you provide it. Firearms, especially, should be kept simple. Single-action 20 gauge shotguns are easiest and safest to use. Remember, youngsters become easily excited when they see wild game for the first time. Either hammer-cocked or bolt action, these guns are better for novices to learn to load, shoot and unload. Rifles should be introduced only when the hunter's handling and shooting skills improve. Muzzle loading weapons, compound bows and razor sharp broadheads have no place on a first-time hunt.

Climbing stands should be used only after practice under close supervision. Young hunters should never be encouraged or allowed to attempt actions beyond their capabilities. The supervisor has a responsibility to keep the youngster's well being in the forefront at all times. Bagging game should be a secondary consideration. Until young hunters have demonstrated the ability to safely conduct themselves with a firearm, they should never be allowed to hunt away from immediate contact.

The proper age for a first hunt depends on individual maturity. Sometimes, it's a good idea for really young hunters to just go along as observers to get the feel of it before adding

the pressure of making a good, clean shot. Letting them carry an unloaded air rifle will give them the confidence and experience they'll need later.

MAKE IT FUN

The days of subsistence hunting and market hunting are long gone. While meat on the table is a welcome by-product of recreational hunting, the key word should be—**fun.** Bring along some paper targets, maybe an air rifle, a portable skeet thrower, clay pigeons and extra light target loads just in case the quarry doesn't materialize. You can always get in some shooting practice (where allowed) and they may enjoy it as much as the hunt.

By inviting your young hunter's friend and their adult supervisors along you'll make them feel more comfortable about a new adventure. It's also a means for new acquaintances to become lasting friendships. Remember, hunting can become a lifestyle,

Try to time a first hunt to coincide with moderate weather. Dove, teal and squirrel hunting take place during warm to hot weather months in Louisiana and can make for some pretty miserable conditions. Restrict hunting under hot, humid conditions to short periods beginning at daylight or ending just before dark.

Hunting during the Christmas and New Year holidays are highly popular since schools are closed. Take care not to expose youngsters to bitter cold and rain, especially without properly insulated, waterproof clothing and boots. A miserable first hunt can turn kids off before they ever learn to appreciate Mother Nature's uncertainties and the finer aspects of the sport.

Make certain the hunt isn't too physically demanding. Kids who are athletes may not have problems, but those who are used to couch-sitting shouldn't be overtaxed. Bring quick energy snacks, sport drinks that prevent dehydration, insect repellent and sun screen to keep comfortable. Making a pre-hunt checklist is a good idea and having the youngster help prepare it will involve them in the planning.

It's important that the hunt be fun. Firearm safety is serious and that can't be understated, but a little laughing and joking before and after the hunt are certainly important elements of a fun hunt.

MAKE IT EDUCATIONAL

The woods can become a meaningful classroom for the new hunter. Every hunt is different and there's unlimited information for all hunters, especially new ones, to absorb. No matter how long a person hunts, the learning process never has to stop.

Often, when asked about their first hunting trip, kids will say it was "boring." Sitting on a stump for two or three hours can be boring to someone who hasn't yet learned to appreciate the value of solitude and the subtleties of the natural world. It's like watching baseball, even though there's apparently no action, equally important strategies are occurring that are picked up only by the more sophisticated fans. Until the nature of the quarry and its habitat is understood, hunters can't see what they're missing.

To fill those slack times and during the walks in and out there's "hunting talk." Gun safety, the use of camouflage and scents and various stalking techniques are just a

Anyone born on or after September 1, 1969 must have satisfactorily completed a Hunter Certification Course approved by the LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in order to legally buy a hunting license.

Photo by Steve Price

few examples of chatting that can become important lessons. Hands-on demonstrations in the woods could include identification of trees and other food sources for animals, or recognizing animal tracks and other signs. First-time hunters should be encouraged to take part in the skinning and processing of game as well as cooking and eating. The safe use of skinning knives should be shown.

How hunting is an important conservation and management tool is another good campfire story. Don't be surprised if you're questioned about the ethics of killing game by an inquiring, young mind. Be prepared to address many of the arguments put forth by anti-hunting groups in a manner easily understood by children. Putting hunting in perspective helps children understand more clearly man's relationship with all living things.

In Louisiana anyone born on or after September 1, 1969 must have proof of satisfactorily completing a Hunter Certification Course approved by the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries in order to legally buy a hunting license. Certification is also required to participate in special youth hunts (for those under 16 only). The courses, however, are offered free to all ages in every parish in the state. Only those ten or older who pass the written examination can receive a certification card, but youngsters as young as ten can receive a Certificate of Attendance. Many families take the course together and that's a great idea.

Presented by qualified volunteer instructors, the course is a comprehensive one including classroom instruction regarding firearm and tree stand safety, hunter ethics and conservation. Actual safe firearms handling and shooting in the field are required parts of the course. For information about registering for a course in your area, contact the LDWF Information & Education Division, PO Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-9000 or by calling (504) 765-2932.

Photo by Steve Price

Careful planning not only assures your own enjoyment but it is the best guarantee for the success of the hunt and the safety of yourself and your hunting companion.

Photo by Pete Cooper, Jr.

A Tale of Autumn Flatfish

STORY BY PETE COOPER, JR.

Just like every hunter and angler has his favorite quarry, as a writer of hunting and fishing lore I have my favorite topics. Southern flounders *(Paralichthys lethostigma)* rank very high on that list, mainly because of their personality, which is much different from that of other saltwater species found along our coast. Because of my interest in them, I recently received the honor of being asked to serve as the recreational fishing representative on a technical task force of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) to create a management plan for them.

Why have a management plan for a fish which is specifically targeted by around one percent of the recreational anglers in our state and which the great majority landed by commercial fishermen are considered to be by-catch, mostly from offshore shrimp trawlers? Mainly because virtually everyone likes to eat them and the plan will ensure there will be flounders around to be eaten for many years to come.

I am quite proud to say that Louisiana was miles ahead of its sister states along the Gulf coast when the plan was proposed. Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) biologists had already compiled vast stores of data on the fish and helped to implement a management plan for our state which is now in effect. That data makes up a large portion of the GSMFC'S plan, and it must be noted that is due in great part to the efforts of Steve Hein, a LDWF biologist who works in the Bourg office and who serves on the task force with me.

Much of the plan is too technical to relate in these lines (or for me to understand as I try to proof-read it.), but some of it is quite interesting. If you put bits and pieces of it together, the information can be used to answer a lot of questions about why you catch flounders, when and where, why you don't and how to can catch more.

For instance, southern flounders can quite happily exist in water ranging in salinity from 0 - 35 parts per thousand or more. That "0", by the way, denotes freshwater and it should explain why you have occasionally boxed the main ingredient in a stuffed flounder dinner while you were flipping plastic worms for bass along the cane lined canals in the Pass a Loutre Management Area — or in similar hot spots for bass across our fresh coastal marshes.

Here's another one. Ever wonder why you seem to catch most of your flounders during October and early November, then suddenly you cannot amass enough of them to get a decent stink out of the skillet? That's because a cold snap has sent most of them offshore on their spawning migration.

That aspect of their personality is one which really endears them to me. Here you have a fish — and a top line predator at that — which is ideally suited for a good life in the shallows but which ventures out into the

Photo by Pete Cooper, Jr.

Early autumn is the best time of the year for flounder fishing. Keep up with their seasonal movements for your best chances for amassing a mess of some of the tastiest fillets around.

open Gulf to depths which can exceed 180 feet in order to reproduce. That is an impressive effort. I'd imagine a great part of the world's overpopulation problem would be neatly resolved if humans had to experience such rigors in order to procreate.

That aside, this flounder story appears in the September/October issue of the Conservationist so that it will coincide with the beginning of the flounder's migration — the time when you have the best chance of acquiring a stash of the best tasting fillets around (within the limit if you please).

Initially (say, about the time you receive this issue) flounders will be scattered throughout the interior bays and marshes and pickings are usually pretty slim. However, it won't be long before these ambush feeders become quite overt in their pursuit of prey, hunting it to a great extent like specks and redfish do. In doing so, they begin to gradually and indirectly move toward the seashore. This is not a mass movement, but very slowly the number of flounders in the inner marshes decreases and begins to build in the outer.

During this transitional stage your chances of catching them increase proportionally to the amount of water you cover. Yes, a hard falling tide may concentrate a few of them at the mouths of small tidal cuts where they will feast on the small shrimp and bait fish being drawn from the marsh by the current created by the dropping water. However, the greatest numbers of them are in singles and you won't encounter many of them while anchored atop an oyster bed or off a long, grassy point.

Covering water, just like you would while fishing for bass, is best done with a bow mounted trolling motor. Here a point of semantics arises. Most folks who ease along the grass shorelines of the interior bays, bayous and broken marsh, flicking their spoons and spinnerbaits at the subtle little points and pockets, are fishing for redfish (like I mentioned, only about one percent of Louisiana's residents specifically target flounders). Now there's certainly nothing wrong with fishing for reds in that manner, especially during early autumn, because it is a very effective way of harvesting flounder fillets, too. In truth, unless you are sight fishing, your next bite is almost as likely to come from a flounder as a red. Concentrate your efforts in two to three feet of water, and retrieve your lure just fast enough to keep it off bottom.

In the lower Delta there is another pattern which at this time of the seasonal clearing of the Mississippi River offers excellent potential for flounders — the cuts leading off the passes below Venice, particularly Grand Pass, Main Pass and South Pass. Take a 3/8-ounce jig head dressed with a purple or chartreuse soft plastic cocahoe and bump it along bottom - always with the current rather than against it - and if you can keep the specks off it, you should end up with a nice mess of flounders.

This deep water opportunity is epitomized by the two spillways leading from the west bank of Southwest Pass generally into West Bay and thence West Delta. While flounders (and redfish) typically begin to show up in these quintessential autumn honey holes in September, the spillways do not reach their full potential until much later. There is good reason why. It is completely dependent on the river remaining low and

reasonably clear throughout the period, low being a reading of five feet or less at the Carrollton Street river gauge in New Orleans.

By late October many, if not most of the flounders which intend to reproduce have staged in a fashion near the seashore. That is where you must fish for them anywhere along the coast in order to enjoy the best action. The Southwest Pass spillways, being reasonably close to the Gulf and providing abundant prey, both fresh and saltwater types, make a grand gang up spot for flounders (and specks, reds and big blue catfish, among others).

Here you should use your depth recorder to locate the down current lip of the hole which is found at the head of each spillway. Set the anchor right there and allow the boat to scope back over the eight to ten-foot-deep flat some 20 to 30 feet. Again, 3/8-ounce jigs cast up current and then bumped along bottom will be effective.

At least they will be until a stout norther drops the water temperature sharply by six or seven degrees. That is the trigger for the mass migration offshore. The fish will travel near bottom, often to points of great depth, until a female suddenly begins to swim rapidly toward the surface, broadcasting her eggs. Then one or more attending males will follow her to fertilize them. Once completed, the spent fish will begin to slowly make their way back to the estuaries. While the offshore migration might take place in mass, spawning takes place individually and over a period of time. Some don't, choosing to spend the rest of their lives in the Gulf. The eggs will drift near the water's surface and usually hatch within a week. Then the larval and post larval flounders will also gradually make their way inshore. There they may live for up to 10 years. It's a truly amazing cycle. It is one which our state's management plan — and that of the GSMFC — will help ensure its continuation in the future.

There is something else that we as sport fishermen can do that will supplement those plans — release the big ones, 20 inches or more. They are the prolific breeders and the most fun to catch. But they, like the big prespawn female largemouth bass, should be returned to preserve the big fish gene pool. Besides, they don't taste nearly as good as the smaller ones do.

Photo by Richard Hussar

Cypress Cove Marina is one of many facilities that provides anglers access to the excellent fishing opportunities around Grand Pass, Main Pass and South Pass.

BORN to TREE

Photo by Millard H. Sharp

STORY BY
JANICE COLLINS

As the feisty elusive creature darts into the hole of a 30 foot bay tree, Nic is already on the trail of another furry adversary with his master's command "In the hole Nic! In the hole—get on up the hill!" Responding to his master commands, Nic the squirrel dog heads up yet another steep bluff with his paws seemingly not touching the ground.

Half cur and half feist, this four year old has treed over 3,000 squirrels in the past three seasons according to his master John Odom of Pride. "Nic tends to be far-ranging, sometimes getting as far as away as 3/4 of a mile but he returns quickly on voice command," Odom proudly states.

The number one hunting sport in Louisiana is squirrel hunting with over 200,000 participants, many who use dogs. According to enthusiasts the main reason is because hunting with a dog adds to the pleasure and camaraderie of the sport by making it a very social and traditional outing. While still or stand hunting requires hunters to be silent and immobile for long periods of time, hunters with a good squirrel dog can noisily tramp through the woods and still come home with the bag limit in record time. Hollering

at the dog and your fellow hunters is acceptable and is particularly attractive to the novice hunter who'll usually have more questions than chances to shoot.

Another major difference between still hunting, stand hunting and using a dog when hunting is the amount of land that's needed. A still hunter may hunt five acres and have a successful hunt . A hunter with a squirrel dog does best with several hundred acres because an exceptional dog like Nic may cover ten acres before he trees and can run all day. And after all, chasing after a squirrel dog requires no patience at all, just the ability to keep up.

And that's what happened on this sunny and chilly December morning when three experienced hunters, three young "would-be" hunters and Nic took to the woods. Starting at 7am, the hunt got off to a slow start with only one squirrel downed in the first hour. Although squirrels are diurnal animals (active during daylight hours), Odom attributed the lack of activity to the full moon the previous night which allowed the squirrels to feed at pre-dawn and become more dormant after sunrise. A better than average fall mast of acorns and berries in Louisiana has provided ample feeding as well as ensuring an increased squirrel population for the coming season.

As the sun moved higher in the sky the squirrels began stirring in the pines and pinoaks and the vines began shaking. Nic was in his element. Within two hours nine fat red squirrels were in the game bag thanks to Nic's keen nose and loud bay along with some excellent marksmanship. Seemingly tireless, Nic led his master and hunting partners Ivy Howze (Watson) and Don Thompson (Baton Rouge) from tree to tree, as the hunters took turns shaking vines and often taking two squirrels from one tree. As Nic swiftly approached a tree that was particularly "hot," he hurdled his compact body sometimes as high as six feet in the air, baying at the top of his canine cords.

Nic's technique includes not leaving the tree until the squirrel or squirrels come down or till his master orders him too. One of the novice hunters attempted to retrieve one of the day's spoils from the underbrush only to be quickly corrected by Nic with a growl and nip that these rewards were for his master and his master only. After all, even a dog needs a little job satisfaction.

According to Odom the crossbreeding of the cur which carries a keen nose and trailing ability and the feist which traditionally is more of an eye and ear dog translates into the best squirrel dog he's owned. At approximately 30 lbs. and 18 inches in height, other squirrel hunters have offered Odom as much as five times what he originally paid for the animal which was considerable (four figure).

Hunting on a 300-acre tract of pine and mixed hardwood trees adjacent to the Mississippi River in East Baton Rouge Parish covered by gullies, steep cliffs and lots of deer tracks, Nic dashed up and down, never tiring or losing his enthusiasm. While the hunting party's movement was somewhat impeded by the terrain, Nic's agility and sure footedness never flagged. Nor did he succumb to the obvious distraction created by the certain presence of whitetails.

In explaining the appeal of squirrel hunting with a dog to hunters of all ages, Howze said that the perfect hunt is made up of three hunters and one dog. One person shakes the vines while the other two cover both sides of the tree and cooperate in selecting the best shot.

While the trees are becoming almost bare this time of the season, the wily tree dwellers camouflage by flattening their bodies into a

Nic's keen nose and trailing ability assures him of yet another squirrel for his master's game bag.

Photo by Janice Collins

Photo by Janice Collins

Nic's technique includes not leaving a "hot" tree until the squirrel is down or his master orders him to.

tree's fork making it difficult or at times impossible to spot. The more eyes the better for the hunters. Then there were those acrobatic bushytails that jumped from tree top to tree top in an effort to escape Nic's yelps and the shotguns. Occasionally they were successful, especially if a convenient hole was available.

As a father of five and grandfather of eight (and still counting), Howze estimates he's taken dozens of kids on their first hunt with a squirrel dog. "It gives you the chance to explain the sport, the characteristics and habits of the animals, explore nature, and to foster a strong sense of hunter safety and duty and responsibility to the environment," he said. He usually spends one season with three to four youngsters, schooling them in the art of squirrel hunting with his dog, Sport.

One of the first lessons Howze taught this morning to the new hunters was to never lay your gun on the ground up. The dog can step on the safety release and a major accident could occur he explained. Another important rule he pointed out in hunting with dogs is that you never shoot a squirrel on the ground, you might hit another hunter, or worse the dog, he joked.

The tie between master and squirrel dog is more than just a working/hunting relationship Howze explained. The loyalty and companionship that evolves during the hunt between hunter and dog extends to the home where most often the dog is also a family pet.

So what is it that gives certain dogs the propensity to hunt and tree? These dog owners declare that certain dogs are simply "born to tree." Out of a litter there may be only one good squirrel dog or the entire litter may tree. According to Howze and Odom, a good squirrel dog is born not made, instinctively taking to pursuit of this particular game animal. Taking into account the thousands of squirrels Odom and Howze have brought home in the game bag through the years, the ability, stamina and desire to hunt are traits Nic and Sport were most certainly born with.

Squirrel season opens in September in Louisiana but hunting with dogs is best in December, January and February recommends Howze. The trees have lost most of their foliage and while the dogs hunt by sight and scent the hunter has to be able to spot the critters. Also cooler temperatures eliminate pesky mosquitoes and send rattlers, cottonmouths and copperheads into dens and out the way of unwary hunter or canine.

With nine squirrels, the boys hunting appetites whetted and a few blistered feet aching, the morning hunt came to an end. With at least thirty miles logged in this morning, Nic hopped nimbly in his master's truck and looked absolutely smug.

That dog can tree.

Don Thompson, Ivy Howze and John Odom proudly display the rewards of the morning hunt with Nic.

Photo by Janice Collins

WATERFOWL REGULATIONS:

How the Process Works

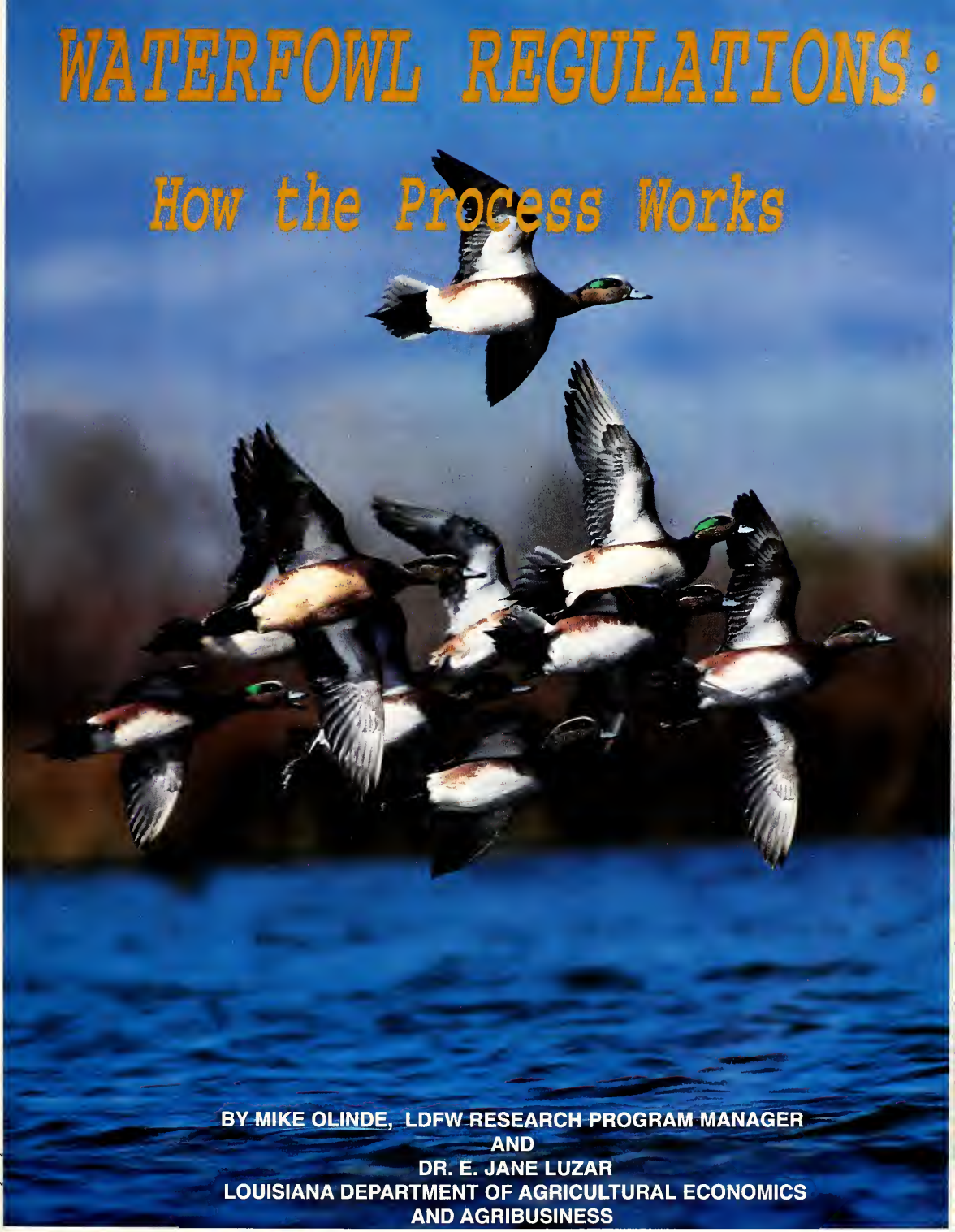

Photo by Gary Kramer

BY MIKE OLINDE, LDFW RESEARCH PROGRAM MANAGER
AND
DR. E. JANE LUZAR
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
AND AGRIBUSINESS

There has always been a great interest in duck hunting in Louisiana because of their abundant numbers in the state during winter. However, with increasing numbers of ducks (Figure 1), this interest has again heightened. Have you ever wondered how or what is the process for setting waterfowl regulations?

One of the first things you should know is that neither the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission nor the Department have the authority to determine the bag limit, season length or dates for waterfowl. This authority lies with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) because of the migratory nature of the birds. The Service receives extremely broad guidance on how to manage this international resource through the Migratory Bird Treaty that includes the United States and the countries of Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Russia. Some of these agreements date to 1916.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 actually empowered the federal government to annually develop waterfowl hunting regulations. Our Commission can only select days, bag limit and dates within a framework of options permitted by the Service. This contrasts sharply with the Commission's total authority for the establishment of resident game seasons and bags.

The Service uses a number of surveys to annually monitor the size and distribution of waterfowl populations. These include May Breeding Population Surveys, May Pond Counts, Production Surveys, Migration/Mid-Winter Population Surveys, Harvest and Parts (Wings and Tails) Surveys and an extensive Leg-Banding Program. Some of these surveys date to the mid-1930's. Their most comprehensive data collection efforts began in 1955 with the initiation of the May Breeding Population Survey. This survey covers some 1.3 million square miles with transects flown throughout most of the duck breeding habitat in the northern United States and much of Canada to count breeding pairs of 10 species of ducks. A sample of these aerial surveys are then checked on the ground to insure accuracy of the aerial data. Information from these collective surveys is considered each year when hunting regulations are established. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries contributes annually to the Service survey process by conducting mid-winter aerial surveys in Louisiana and sending biologists to the annual Parts Survey (Wing Bee) and to Canada to assist in duck and goose banding.

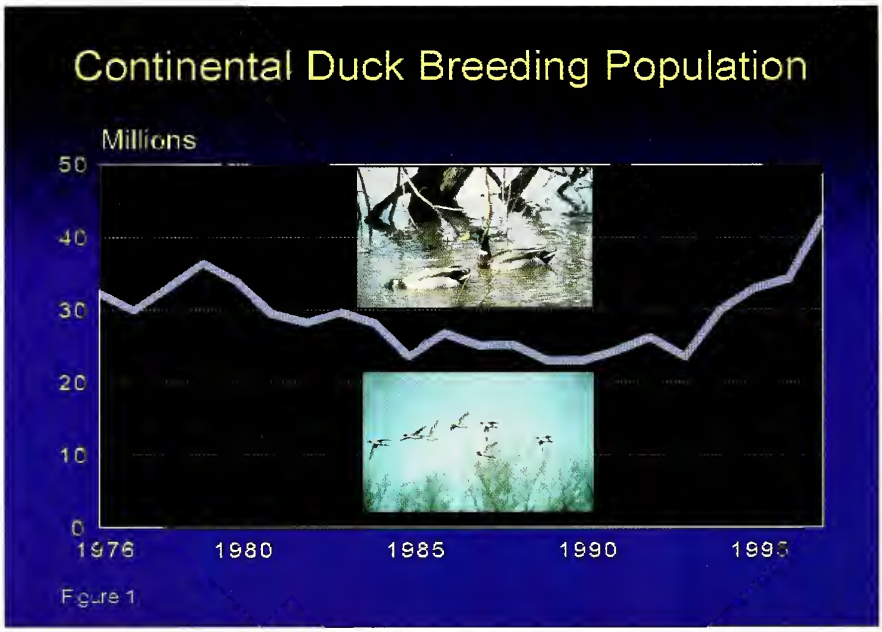

Figure 1

National Regulatory Process

The states participate in the Service regulatory process through the Flyway Council system. There are four Flyways nationwide and Louisiana is in the Mississippi Flyway which includes the 14 states roughly west of the Appalachian Mountain Range and east of Texas. Each state and Canadian province has one member on the Council. This system was developed in the early 1950s as an administrative system to coordinate waterfowl hunting regulations and other conservation issues.

A state's Flyway Council member is usually a high level administrative biologist of the state wildlife agency or its director. A Flyway Technical committee, composed of waterfowl biologists, serve as consultants to each council as they deliberate various waterfowl issues.

Finally, the Service has a Service Regulations Committee (SRC), which is composed of six high level administrators, that listens to input from their staff, a Council representative, conservation organizations and private individuals. The SCR then makes its recommendation to the Director of the Service and the Secretary of the Interior who ultimately establish the regulation framework. As one might expect, this process does not happen overnight. The process begins in February and continues through early August when proposals by the Service are finally published and provided to the states and general public for comments or action (Figure 2).

So what do biologists use to develop their recommendations at the flyway level? Historically, the various surveys were used as general guides for recommendations. Today, a slightly different tool is used in addition to the surveys. The management system know as "Adaptive Harvest Management" that was developed for use in the waterfowl regulation setting process. The Mallard Breeding Population and May Pond Counts on the breeding grounds are two factors that drive the Adaptive Harvest model used by the Service as a tool to determine the number of days of duck hunting and daily bag to allow.

Under the system, there are currently four options: very restrictive, restrictive, moderate and liberal. Depending on the option the model predicts, the season length can range from as few as 20 days and as many as 60 while the bag limit is either three or six ducks (Table 1).

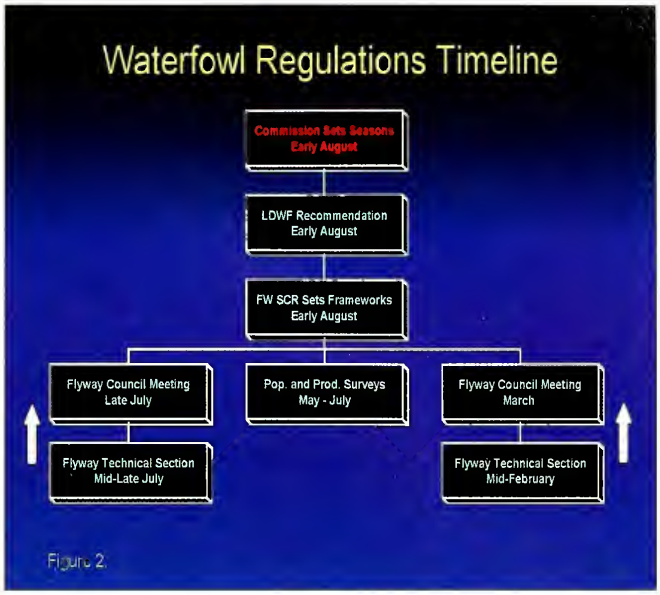

Figure 2.

Adaptive Harvest Options

	Very Restrictive	Restrictive	Moderate	Liberal
Season Length	20 Days	30 Days	45 Days	60 Days
Bag Limit	3 Ducks	3 Ducks	6 Ducks	6 Ducks

Table 1

State Regulatory Process

At the state level, once the Service has established the season length and bag limit frameworks, the Department makes hunting season dates and bag recommendations to our Commission. For the general waterfowl season, this is done at the August Commission meeting. The Department's biological staff uses a number of factors in developing its recommendation including historical duck migration patterns as determined by aerial surveys conducted by Wildlife Division personnel, historical marsh and weather conditions, and public input.

The waterfowl hunting season dates have traditionally opened in the West Zone of the state the first weekend in November when 55 days of hunting were allowed during the mid-1970s and early 1980s. This time was selected for a combination of reasons including (1) duck numbers, (2) water level conditions in the marshes and (3) traditional harvest area.

Our waterfowl surveys have shown that large numbers ducks, particularly blue-winged teal, green-winged teal, gadwall, wigeon, northern shovelers and northern pintail, are in the coastal marshes by early November (Figure 3). Water level is generally lower in our coastal marshes during November as compared to December and January. As a result, duck feeding (and hunting) conditions are also generally better at this time for most coastal marshes.

Flooded agricultural lands such as rice and soybeans and bottomland hardwood forest are also important to ducks and duck hunters, but not as important as our coastal marshes. Size and availability of water certainly plays a role in determining this relative importance. For example, our coastal marshes cover some four million acres. In contrast, rice production generally occurs on about 600,000 acres in Louisiana of which about one-third is second cropped.

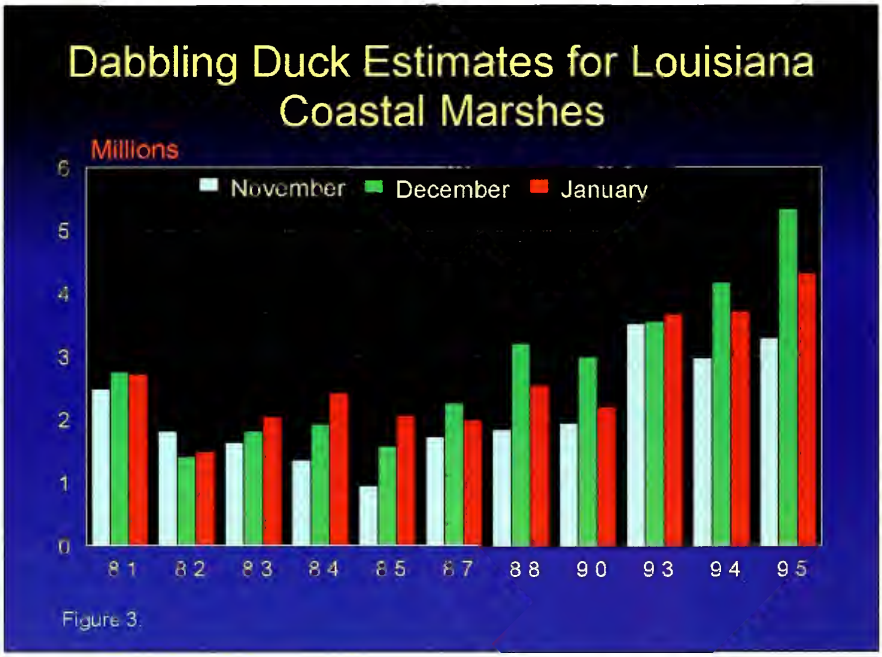

Figure 3.

Coastal marshes in southwest Louisiana provide vast areas of waterfowl habitat and account for the majority of the dabbling duck harvest in the state. As a result, coastal marshes are also extremely important to Louisiana waterfowling and its associated economics. For example, Cameron Parish, which includes almost one million acres of marshland, generally accounts for about 60-80 percent of the regional harvest and 30-50

percent of the statewide harvest of these ducks.

The tasks of recommending and establishing seasons are often difficult for the Department and the Commission. When it comes to the duck season for the West Zone, the dilemma is that marsh hunting is generally better in earlier November before the rains raise the water levels in the marsh. However, hunting is better in the rice country and other agricultural areas in late November and December after the rains flood the fields and marsh conditions have deteriorated.

We attempt to accommodate (which often means develop compromises) sociological and demographic concerns when biology is not the primary issue. To this end, responding to input from the public, the opening date in the West Zone was moved to the second weekend in November and the second split closed later in January a few years ago. The East Zone season dates are usually later and run until the end of the framework (the Sunday nearest January 20th).

Public Opinion

In a continuing effort to understand the desires of our hunters, the Department conducts periodic special surveys. In the fall of 1997, the Department, cooperating with the LSU Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, conducted a mail survey of state duck stamp buyers. Over 10,000 waterfowl hunters were asked to share their opinions about possible changes in the waterfowl hunting seasons structure and indicate their preferences for alternative management strategies. In addition, hunters were asked to provide information on their duck hunting characteristics. Forty-three percent (4,321) of the sample responded to the survey.

This survey agrees with results of prior harvest surveys relative to the importance of various parishes to waterfowl hunting. The coastal region, particularly Cameron (11 percent) and Vermilion (10 percent) Parishes, and parishes along major river systems such as the Mississippi, Atchafalaya, and Red Rivers were the most preferred parishes for waterfowl hunting (Figure 4). Fifty-four percent of the hunters reported hunting in the West Zone, 46 percent of the hunters reported hunting in the East Zone and 21 percent indicated that they hunted in both zones.

Concerning bag limits and season length, hunter responses suggested that a bag limit of five was important for hunter satisfaction. Over 50 percent of the hunters responded that they preferred five ducks and fewer days if restrictions were necessary. Similarly, over 50 percent indicated that they preferred five ducks and more days rather than six ducks and less days if liberalization of bag or days was an option.

In the survey, several hunting zone options were also offered. Although none of the three zone options was preferred by 50 percent of the hunters, the existing east-west zone structure received the highest support (45 percent). The second most preferred option was no zone (35 percent). The no zone option probably would work well in the state as long as 60 days were offered because of the ability to have three splits. (Only two splits are allowed when a state is zoned.)

Unfortunately, it is highly likely that duck seasons will fall into the moderate level option (45 days) in Adaptive Harvest model within a few years because the current wet cycle on the breeding grounds is expected to end soon. With only a 45-day season, it is virtually impossible to provide quality hunting conditions for all areas of the state and still have the season open during the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years holiday periods. You may ask, "Why not just switch from no zones to zones if the days

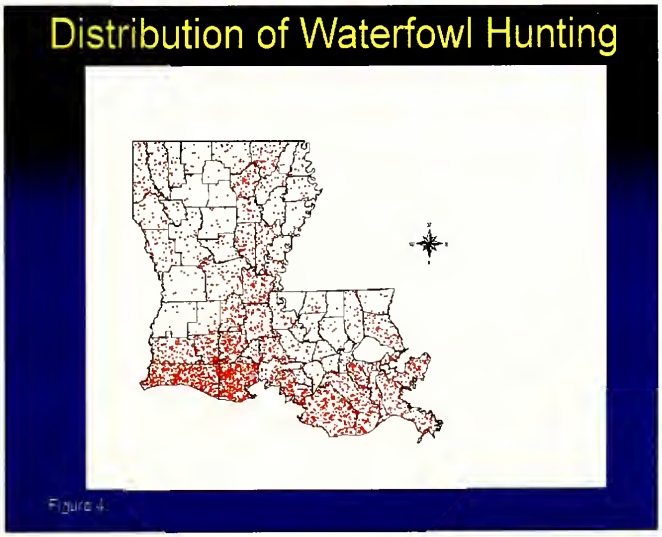

Figure 4

Louisiana Hunting and Fishing Regulations 1998-99

LOUISIANA HUNTING SEASONS 1998-99

The following is only a summary of rules and regulations governing the taking of game animals within the State of Louisiana.
For additional information, consult the 1998-99 Louisiana Hunting Regulations pamphlet available wherever hunting licenses are sold.

RESIDENT GAME HUNTING SEASON DATES AND BAG LIMITS

Quail: Nov. 14-Feb. 28. Daily bag limit, 10, possession limit, 20.
Rabbit: Oct. 3-Feb. 28. Daily bag limit, 8, possession limit, 16.
Squirrel: Oct. 3-Feb. 14. Daily bag limit, 8, possession limit, 16.
Deer: Dates vary. See following schedule. Daily bag limit, 1 antlered and 1 antlerless (when harvest of antlerless deer is legal), a total of 6 per season by all methods of take.
Shooting Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset daily.

DEER HUNTING SCHEDULE

Deer Stands: *On Wildlife Management Areas and Refuges all deer stands must be removed from the area one hour after the close of legal shooting hours each day.*

Area 1: Oct. 1-Jan. 31 (archery), Nov. 14-20 and Jan. 25-31 (muzzleloader/either sex), Nov. 21-Dec. 4 and Jan. 9-24 (still hunt), Dec. 5-13 and Dec.19-Jan. 8 (with/without dogs).
Area 2: Oct. 1-Jan. 31 (archery), Oct. 17-23 and Jan. 4-10 (muzzleloader/either sex), Oct. 24-Dec. 4 (still hunt), Dec. 5-Jan. 3 (with/without dogs).
Area 3: Sept. 19-Jan. 19 (archery), Oct. 5-9 and Dec. 12-18 (muzzleloader/either sex), Oct. 10-Dec. 6 and Dec. 19-Jan. 3 (still hunt).
Area 4: Oct. 1-Jan. 31(archery), Nov. 14-20 and Jan. 4-10 (muzzleloader/either sex), Nov. 21-Jan. 3 (still hunt).
Area 5: Oct. 1-Jan. 31(archery), Nov. 14-20 and Jan. 4-10 (muzzleloader/*bucks only*), Nov. 21-29 (still hunt).
Area 6: Oct. 1-Jan. 31(archery), Nov. 14-20 and Jan. 25-31 (muzzleloader/either sex), Nov. 21-Dec. 4 (still hunt), Dec. 5-13 and Dec. 19-Jan. 24 (with/without dogs).
Area 7: Oct. 1-Jan. 31 (archery), Oct. 3-9 and Jan. 18-24 (muzzleloader/either sex), Oct. 10-25 and Nov. 21-Dec. 6 (still hunt), Dec. 12-Jan. 17 (with/without dogs).

HUNTER ORANGE: *Any person hunting deer shall display on his head, chest and/or back a total of not less than 400 square inches of "Hunter Orange" during the open deer gun season. Persons hunting on privately owned, legally posted land may wear a cap or a hat that is completely covered with hunter orange material in lieu of the 400 square inches. These provisions shall not apply to persons hunting deer from elevated stands on property that is privately owned and legally posted or to archery deer hunters hunting on legally posted lands where firearm hunting is not permitted by agreement of the landowner or lessee. WARNING: DEER HUNTERS ARE CAUTIONED TO WATCH FOR PERSONS HUNTING OTHER GAME OR ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES NOT REQUIRING "HUNTER ORANGE".*

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS: *Obtain pamphlet for schedule and map.*

1999 TURKEY SEASON DATES: *To be announced in the 1998-99 Turkey Hunting Regulations pamphlet available January 1999*

1998-99 MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING SEASON DATES: *Migratory bird hunting dates and regulations to be announced in the Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations pamphlet available October 1998.*

MODERN FIREARM SCHEDULE (EITHER-SEX SEASONS)

Area 1: Nov. 21-22, 27-29 and Dec. 5-6, 12-13 *except* Caldwell, Catahoula, Franklin and LaSalle parishes either-sex dates are Nov. 21-22, 27-29 *only*. Avoyelles, Grant and Rapides parishes either-sex dates are Nov. 21-22, 27-29 and Dec. 5-6 *only*.
Area 2: Oct. 24-25, Oct. 31-Nov. 1, 7-8, 27-29 and Dec. 5-6 *except* Caldwell and LaSalle parishes either-sex dates are Oct. 24-25 and Nov. 27-29 *only*. Avoyelles Parish either-sex dates are Oct. 24-25, Nov. 27-29 and Dec. 5-6 *only*.
Area 3: Oct. 10-11, 24-25, Oct. 31-Nov. 1, 7-8, 27-29 *except* St. Landry Parish either-sex dates are Oct. 10-11, Nov. 27-29 and Dec. 5-6 *only*.
Area 4: Nov. 21-22, 27-29 *except* that portion of East Carroll Parish lying between the Mississippi River Levee to the Mississippi River either-sex dates are Nov. 21-22, 27-29 and Dec. 5-6, 12-13 *only*.
Area 5: None
Area 6: Nov. 21-22, 27-29 and Dec. 5-6, 12-13 *except* Avoyelles, Rapides and St. Landry parishes either-sex dates are Nov. 21-22, 27-29 and Dec. 5-6 *only*.
Area 7: Oct. 10-11, Nov. 21-22, 27-29 and Dec. 12-13 (*no exceptions*).

HUNTING LICENSES

Mandatory Hunter Education Training: *All persons born on or after September 1, 1969 must show proof of satisfactorily completing a Hunter Education course approved by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in order to purchase a basic hunting license.*

Resident

1. Basic Season (excluding Big Game) $10.50
2. Big Game (required of all deer and turkey hunters in addition to Basic license) $10.50
3. Bow License $10.50
4. Muzzleloader License $10.50
5. Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp (Duck Stamp) $5.50
6. Universal License (Resident Fishing, Saltwater, Basic Hunting, Big Game, Bow and Muzzleloader) $53.00
7. Wild Louisiana Stamp $5.50
8. Louisiana Wild Turkey Stamp (required of all turkey hunters in addition to Basic and Big Game licenses) $5.50
9. Wild Louisiana (1 day) $2.00
10. Harvest Information Program Stamp ..... Free

All persons hunting migratory gamebirds (doves, ducks, geese, woodcock, rails, snipe, coots or gallinules) in Louisiana must be HIP certified in addition to other appropriate licenses.

Holiday Gifts from the Louisiana Conservationist

Sportsman's Paradise Denim Shirts

100 percent cotton, stonewashed denim sports shirts. Lightweight and comfortable button-down, embroidered with *Sportsman's Paradise.* S,M,L,XL
Long Sleeve **$35** Short Sleeve **$32**

Sportsman's Paradise Sweatshirt

Make a statement with this two button collar sweatshirt. It's fleece-lined for extra warmth. Available in heather gray, graced in front with the *Sportsman's Paradise* logo.
M,L,XL,XXl **$30**

Sportsman's Paradise Cardigan

This soft fleece cardigan with a four button front and two pockets will keep you warm and cosy through the winter. Off-white or navy. One size fits all. **$30**

Trout & Bird Knife

Classic, working style with coveyor belt no-slip grip handle. Four inch head, bead blasted blade with LDWF logo. **$80**

Trout & Bird Knife Limited Edition

Classic, collectors style. Serially numbered only ***100 available.*** Unique buffalo scale handle with pewter bass emblem. Four inch stainless steel blade.
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Cowhide sheath included with each style.

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100 percent cotton, preshrunk, silk screened with Sportsman's Paradise. Teal green, khaki, white (not shown) S,M,L,XL **$15**

Five panel caps in light weight distressed cotton. Embroidered with *Louisiana Sportsman*. khaki/green, khaki/blue. **$12.95**

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Hand crafted pewter pins in two sizes. Full size pins average 2" x 1". Mini pins average 3/4" x 1/2". Each full size pin has two clasps. *Specify number and name when ordering.*

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Full Size Pins

1 - $6.00 each	2 - $5.50 each	3 or more - $5.00 each
100 Channel catfish	304 Woodcock	416 Armadillo
111 Sunfish	308 Turkey (flying)	418 Wolf
113 Black Crappie	312 Woodduck (decoy)	421 White-tail (8 pt.)
140 Bass	321 Mallard	425 Wild Boar
141 Largemouth bass	322 Woodduck	426 Mountain Lion
152 Paddlefish	326 Turkey	475 Dolphin (porpoise)
201 Sailfish	329 Bobwhite	499 Bat
203 Dolphin fish	331 Bald eagle	527 Crawfish
204 Shark	333 Eagle	530 Lobster
207 Striped bass	342 Pelican	531 Crab
209 Tarpon	345 Great blue heron	532 Shrimp
211 Speck (weakfish)	350 Hummingbird	570 Tiger Swallowtail
217 Swordfish	351 Dove	571 Luna moth
219 King mackerel	360 Horned owl	590 Frog
222 Flounder	361 Snowy owl	591 Tree frog
227 Redfish	372 Blue jay	600 Alligator
269 Sea horse	402 White-tail deer	607 Sea turtle
301 Pheasant	405 Black bear	Bass fisherman
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1 - $3.00 each	2 - $2.50 each	3 or more - $2.25 each
M100 Catfish		
M140 Bass	M329 Quail	M530 Lobster
M304 Woodcock	M333 Eagle	M532 Shrimp
M320 Canada goose	M400 Buck head	M531 Crab
M321 Mallard	M405 Bear	M600 Alligator
M326 Turkey	M420 Buck (jumping)	M702 Arrowhead

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Detailed drawing of the basin including the Atchafalaya Delta Wildlife Management Area. Specify folded or rolled when ordering.
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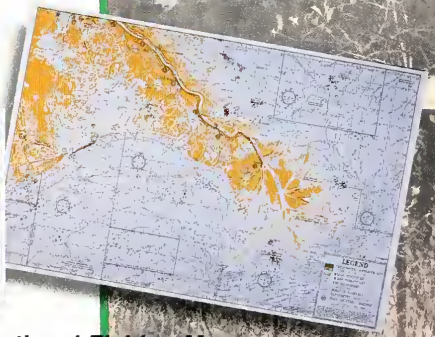

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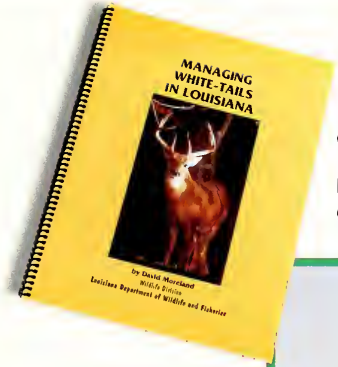

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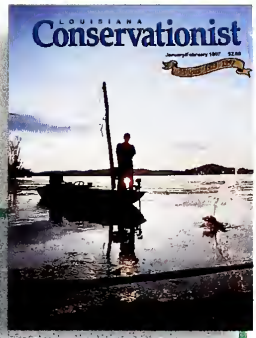

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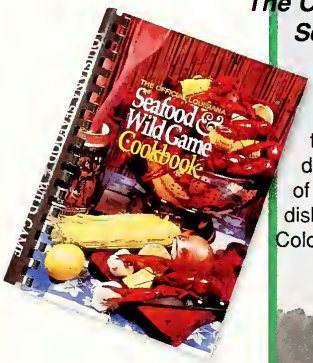

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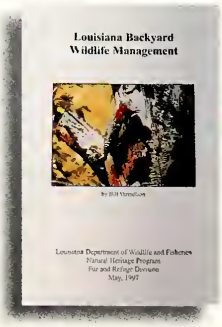

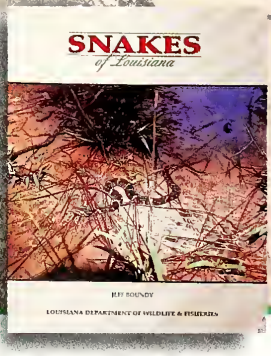

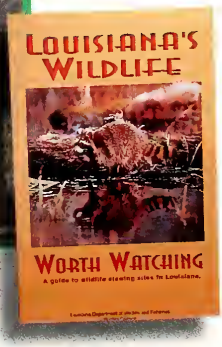

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Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

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The Flexi-Flask can be frozen, boiled, rolled or folded. Made with electronically welded seams with a push-pull cap and plastic laminate with a durable neoprene cover. Great for ball games, camping, hiking or just hanging out. Keeps 20 ounces of any beverage hot or cold. Colors: Forest Green, Mossy Oak Camo, Woodland Camo.

Forest Green **$19.95**
Mossy Oak & Woodland Camo **$21.95** (each)
Order all three designs ***$60.00***

Pocket Chain saw

The ultimate quick-cutting, portable, compact hand chain saw. High strength, heat-treated, rust resistant steel. Chain measures 28-inches long. Can be operated by one or two persons. **$17.25**

Kitchen & Utility Shears

From kitchen to shop, these shears offer features you won't find anywhere else. Their design includes a special notch that grips and cuts through bones and a serrated blade. A nutcracker, jar opener, screwdriver, lid lifter and bottle opener are also included. The super sharp blades quickly disconnect for easy cleaning.

Blastmatch Fire Starter System

Spring loaded rare earth flint bar with embedded tungsten carbide striker in a patented one handed system. A practical, multi-purpose outdoor tool. Use it around camp or home. Use it carefully as an emergency light source or signal. **$15.95**

Wetfire Fire Starting Tinder

Water resistant cubes will light easily in most wet, windy or cold conditions. For use with BLASTMATCH. Use it around camp or at home. **$6.00**

Blastmatch & Wetfire
$20.50

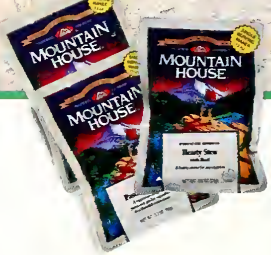
Eagle Waist Pack

NEW

This carrying system allows hunters and hikers to keep what's needed handy. Made of soft, quiet fleece and water resistant, sports large rear pocket, two side drawstring pockets with sports bottles and extra pouches for ammo.
$40 w/o suspenders
$47 with suspenders

Mountain House Freeze Dried Foods

Developed by an industry leader in freeze drying technology, Mountain House offers the best in emergency foods. Great for storing at the camp or weather emergencies. Great tasting, shelf stable for years, lightweight and compact. Convenient preparation pouch included. Available in 13-ounce single servings.



Hearty Beef Stew	**$4.50**
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Pasta Primavera (vegetarian)	**$4.50**
Rice & Chicken	**$4.50**
Spaghetti (w/meat)	**$3.50**
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NEW

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This three inch stainless steel blade pocket knife is ideal for the hunter or angler but versatile enough for everyday use too. Black or yellow. Closed length: 3 1/2 inches. **$22**

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Skillfully hand-crafted from shed antlers, no two are alike. Two styles are offered: single twist, small ballpoint and double twist, large ballpoint. Both pens use standard refills. Each comes in an exquisite rosewood box laser engraved with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries logo.

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(Price includes rosewood box.)

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30% off all selections

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One size only
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$10.50

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Same high quality brass belt buckles emblazon with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' logo. Available in turquoise or red coral inlay and solid brass.
Two sizes:
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Quality crafted rosewood pen engraved with Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries. A perfect compliment to the Deluxe Note Pad Holder. Black velvet sheath included. **$15**

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9. Louisiana Wild Turkey Stamp (required of all turkey

FISHING LICENSES

The information on this page is only an abbreviated summary of rules and regulations governing the taking of fish within the State of Louisiana. For additional information, consult the current Louisiana Fishing Regulations pamphlet available wherever fishing licenses are sold. Obtain information on federal regulations from the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council at 813/228-2815.

A recreational fisherman must purchase and have in possession a valid basic recreational fishing license to use the following (additional gear licenses are required for numbers 8-14):

1. Bow and arrow
2. A barbless spear
3. Frog gig/catcher
4. Scuba gear
5. Hook and line (trot line)
6. Cast net with a radius not to exceed 8 ft. 6 in
7. Rod and reel
8. Crab traps
9. Slat traps
10. Oyster tongs
11. Wire nets
12. Crawfish traps
13. Hoop nets
14. Trawls

Recreational License Fees

All basic sports fishing licenses and recreational gear licenses expire on June 30 each year.

	Resident	Non-Resident
1. Hook and line (cane pole)	$2.50	N/A
2. Basic Fishing	$5.50	$31
3. Basic Trip License (3 days)	N / A	$10
4. Saltwater Angler's License (In addition to Basic Fishing)	$5.50	$36
5. Saltwater Trip License (3 day) (In addition to Basic Trip)	N / A	$15
6. Charter Trip License (per trip)	N / A	$2.50

All non-residents taking trips on charter vessels operated by a licensed guide in saltwater areas of the state may possess a Non-Resident Charter Fishing Trip License for $2.50. Licenses are available from the guide.

Species	Size Limit	Creel Limit	Exceptions
Black Bass (largemouth and spotted)	Call your local Wildlife and fisheries district office for information.		
Blue Catfish	12"	None	A recreational angler may catch 25 fish daily below the size limit for these species in combination.
Buffalo Fish	16"	None	
Channel Catfish	11"	None	
Crappie	None	50	
Flathead Catfish	14"	None	
Freshwater Drum	12"	None	
Striped Bass or Hybrid Striped Bass	Only 2 over 30"	5 (any combination)	None
White Bass	None	50	Toledo Bend limit 25
Yellow Bass	None	50	None
Other Freshwater Fish	None	None	None

SALTWATER FISHING REGULATIONS

State Waters (Inshore waters to about 3 miles offshore)

Species	Recreational	Commercial
Black Drum	16" minimum, TL** only 1 over 27" 5/person/day	16" minimum, TL 27" maximum, TL over 27", permit required
Cobia (lemon fish)	37" minimum, TL 2/person/day	37" minimum, TL 2/person/day
Greater Amberjack	28" minimum, FL*** 1/person/day	36" minimum, FL
Groupers* (other than Jewfish)	20" minimum, TL 5/person any variety****	20" minimum, TL
Jewfish	**prohibited**	**prohibited**
King Mackerel	14" minimum, TL 2/person/day	14" minimum, TL
Marlin, Blue	86" minimum, LJFL*****	**prohibited**
Marlin, White	62" minimum,LJFL	**prohibited**
Red Drum* (redfish)	16" minimum,TL only 1 over 27" 5/person/day	**prohibited**
Seabass,Black	8" minimum, TL	8" minimum, TL
Snappers	Consult Recreational Fishing pamphlet or call your local Wildlife and Fisheries district office for information.	
Southern Flounder	10/person/day	10 fish/person - 100 pounds on shrimp boats
Spanish Mackerel	14" minimum, TL 10/person/day	14" minimum, TL
Spotted Seatrout* (speckled trout)	12" minimum,TL 25/person/day	see Commercial Fishing Regulations Pamphlet
Striped Mullet	100 pounds/vessel/day	see Commercial Fishing Regulations pamphlet

*see fishing pamphlets for additional information
** total length
*** fork length
****2 day possession limit on multi-day trips on charter or head boats
*****Size limit expressed in terms of length from the lower jaw to the fork of the tail.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898

Help stop poaching. Call Operation Game Thief's toll free hotline. 1-800-442-2511

LIFETIME LICENSES

Anthaume, Danielle	Lafayette
Arledge, Chad	Livingston
Aull, Herbert Jr.	Baker
Banks, Seth	Albany
Banta, Mark	River Ridge
Barber, Lee III	Zachary
Barr, Blake	Bastrop
Blanchard, Chad	Gonzales
Blouin, Micah	Brusly
Bolton, Taylor	Baton Rouge
Boquet, Patti	Houma
Boudreaux, Darren	Houma
Branch, Billy	Farmerville
Briggs, Ricky	Layfayette
Broussard, Jeffery	Bourg
Buller, Ted	Bille Platte
Bumgardner, Benjamin	Sibley
Bumgardner, Matthew	Sibley
Cadow, Edward	Talisheek
Callaway, Michael	Shreveport
Campbell, Edward	Shreveport
Campbell, Edward Jr.	Shreveport
Cantrelle, Scott	Litte
Carmouche, Donald	Baton Rouge
Carmouche, John	Baton Rouge
Carmouche, Donald Jr.	Thibodeaux
Chachere, John Jr.	Lafayette
Comeaux, Kerry	Denham Springs
Cone, Charles Jr.	Keithville
Corley, James	Florien
Corley, John	Florien
Cressy, David Jr.	New Orleans
Cuevas, John	Lafayette
Daniel, Douglas	Lafayette
Dean, Curtis	Hineston
Denning, Julie	Morgan City
Devall, Frederick	Baton Rouge
Dodson, John	Sulphur
Ducote, Chase	Hessmer
Duhon, Robert Jr.	Morgan City
Dunn, David	Metairie
Duplantier, Neil	Violet
Duval, John	Baton Rouge
Easley, Richard	Denham Springs
Edwards, Cecil	Colfax
Estep, Chad	Zachary
Fabregas, Shaun	Houma
Fletcher, Eric	Shreveport
Fletcher, Mary	Shreveport
Freeman, William	Baton Rouge
Frickey, Sean	Sulphur
Frierson, Thomas	Shreveport
Frierson, William	Shreveport
Gacharna, Davie	Metairie
Geisman, Hunter	Atlanta
Gibson, Clayton Jr.	Clton
Habetz, Aaron	Crowley
Hanson, Harold	West Monroe
Harmon, Robert	Homer
Harms, James	Dry Prong
Hazleton, Charles	Denham Springs
Hazleton, Susan	Denham Springs
Hodges, Justin	Prairieville
Hollier, Matthew	Jennings
Holloway, Kyle	Delhi
Holloway, William	Delhi
House, Wade	Oak Grove
Huckabay, David	Coushatta
Huckabay, Pugh III	Shreveport
Huckabay, Reed	Coushatta
Jacob, Travis	Kenner
Jewell, Stephen	Ventress
Johnson, Mike	Lake Charles
Jones, Heath	Lakes Charles
Jones, Holdton	Lake Charles
Jones, Hunter	Lake Charles
Jones, Kirkland	Ruston
Jordan, Sherman Jr.	Pearl River
Jumonville, Dutcher	Ventress
Jumonville, John III	Ventress
Keller, Kirby	St. Amant
Kilpatrick, Jon	Baton Rouge
Koerner, John	New Orleans
Koerner, Parker	New Orleans
Labbe', Vincent	Lafayette
Lacour, Kevin	Prairieville
Lange, Charles	Violet
Lapeyrouse, Kevin	Walker
Lavigne, Amanda	Shreveport
Lavigne, Kirk Jr.	Shreveport
Lemoine, Jason	Plaucheville
Magee, Clayton	Franklinton
Mancuso, James	St. Amant
Mancuso, Kevin	St. Amant
Mandina, Duke	Shreveport
Martinez, Kenny	Norco
McBride, Michael	Crowley
McKinney, Clint	Pollock
McKinney, Bernice Jr.	Shreveport
Meche, Christine	Fields
Mills, Gregory	Youngsville
Mitchell, Dane	Fluker
Mitchell, Robert IV	Bossier City
Mouton, Gabriel	Baton Rouge
Nauta, Melissa	Greenwe Springs
O'Meara Geoffrey	Lake Charles
Olivier, Dustin	Houma
Olson, Lewis	Port Allen
Osburn, Jonathan	Port Allen
Patrick, Brad	Baton Rouge
Pendarvis, James	Jena
Pendarvis, John	Jena
Persick, David	Grosse Tete
Poche, Rory	Thibodaux
Polk, Michael	Pearl River
Prejean, Eric	Addis
Rhodes, Paul	Baskin
Richard, Michael	Sulphur
Roberts, Josh	Coushatta
Robertson, Ryan	St. Abriel
Rodrigue, Benjamin	Vacherie
Rodrigue, Erkle III	Vacherie
Schwartzenburg, Robert	Slaughter
Scott, Todd	Deridder
Sharp, Thomas	Sterlington
Shaw, Stuart	Couatta
Smith, Earl	Pineville
Smith, William	Sterlington

every 5 years under a specific schedule. Then, once an option is selected, it must be maintained for the entire 5-year period.

Another question addressed the ending date of the season. Although the current federal framework requires that duck hunting end by the Sunday nearest to January 20th of each year, the Department has supported the right of states to choose a duck season that extends to the end of January. Recognizing that no additional days of hunting would be allowed, hunters overwhelming (82%) indicated that they would prefer the season extend to January 31st. This support was consistent among coastal and non-coastal hunters. However, Department data suggests a trend of more mallards in the coastal zone during early-mid December than early-mid January during the past decade (Figure 5).

Many hunters and casual observers believe that there are always more ducks present after the hunting season ends. This view often has developed as a result of seeing more ducks on their hunting areas. In many cases, ducks have simply responded to the lack of hunting pressure and use these areas during daylight hours rather than staying on refuges and other non-hunted areas following the season closure. Many ducks migrate to Louisiana regardless of weather conditions each year. Nevertheless, the numbers of ducks in Louisiana annually will fluctuate drastically based on the severity and duration of cold weather north of us. Some species, particularly mallards and some diving ducks, are more likely to stay north of Louisiana in high numbers until severe weather forces them south. However, mallards generally contribute less than 20 percent of Louisiana's duck harvest (Figure 6) as compared to about 50 percent of other Mississippi Flyway states' harvests. Should the duck season framework become January 31st, the Commission's task to provide quality hunting conditions for all areas of the state will be more difficult, even with a 60-day season. When fewer days of duck hunting are allowed, the ability to set dates that cover the traditional holidays and also extend to late January becomes impossible.

As you can see, the waterfowl regulation setting process is quite involved. The Department listens and responds to constituent concerns. It is actively pursuing avenues and information that allow development of seasons which accommodate the hunting public's highly varied desires as much as possible.

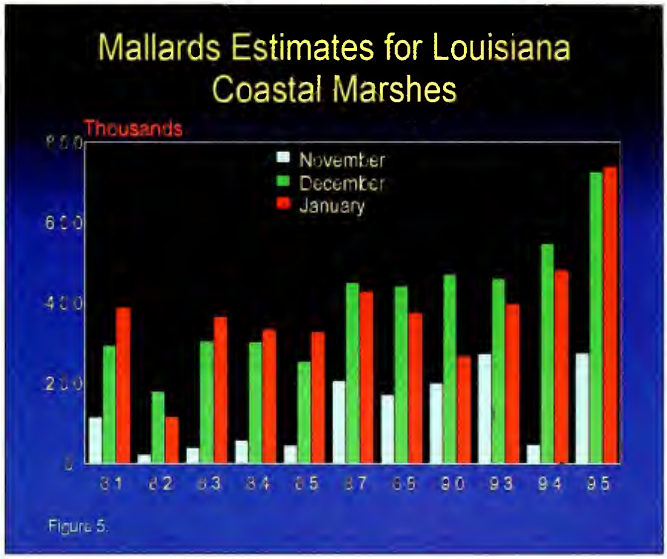


Figure 5.

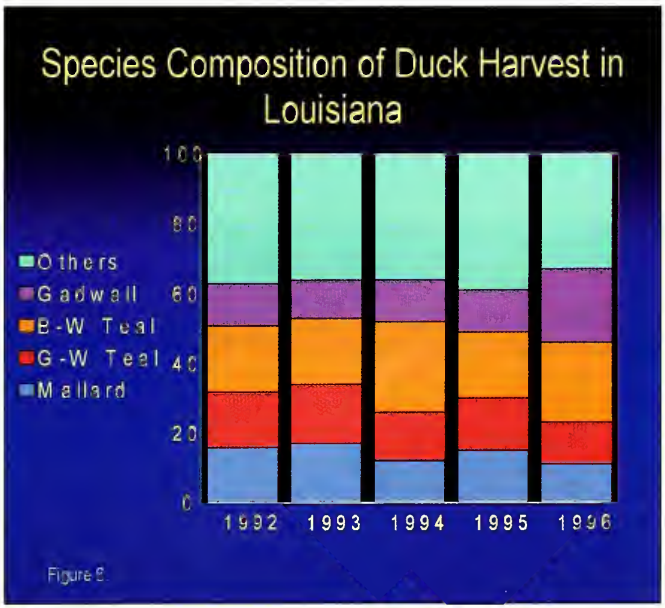


Figure 6

Just GREYS

Photo by Steve Price

STORY BY HUMBERTO FONTOVA

With 58 degrees and a light breeze it wasn't the temperature making me tremble. I had longjohns and a heavy cotton shirt. No, this trembling was the kind that originates in the pit of a hollow stomach, works outward toward the extremities and accompanied by near euphoria, not dread or fright. We call them the "opening day shakes."

Diehard duck hunters are particularly susceptible to this condition, especially while paddling down a trenasse in twilight with gabbling, quacking and the haunting three-note whistle of widgeons filling the air. Watching dark silhouettes flapping

off every thirty yards along the trennasse rasping their alarm call; watching others circling over and splashing down in the surrounding pond; the rushing of wings as squadrons of greenwing teal blaze overhead intensify this nervous condition to a point where speech becomes nearly impossible. The words leak out in short staccato gasps.

"Has it really been ten months?" Robbie gasped from the front of the pirogue. Four blacks erupted from a puddle to our left at the sound of his voice.

"Doesn't seem like it son." I whispered from the back of the pirogue. We turned through a cut in the Rosseaus, ducking under the willow branches and almost ran over a pair of poul-deau who half-flapped, half-ran to the middle of the pond which seemed to be covered with hyacinths. But when I accidently slammed my paddle against the side of the pirogue the "hyacinths" erupted.

Maybe a hundred ducks flapped off from that cove. The din of pumping wings and startled quacks was heavenly. After ten months of anticipation, what a sensation.

"Dad, aren't those Greys?" Robbie blurted out.

"Right son" I answered beaming. "Remember last year? They love this place — and they'll be back."

By the time the 18 decoys were out it was legal shooting time. We jammed the pirogue along the bank and stuck four palmetto leaves in front of it for cover. The whole time we were serenaded by greys gabbling and widgeons whistling overhead. Two teal swam in the decoys.

The first flock came in high from behind us. I was into the third note of a wretched hail call aimed at a flock a quarter mile ahead when Robbie jabbed me with his elbow and pointed above us.

Ah yes, four greys had cupped and were starting to bank to the left. They'd obviously seen the decoys so I shut up. Greys don't need much coaxing. Robbie started standing to shoot and I almost yanked his arm off. "Down son!! Wait till they get closer!" I was trying to whisper but my excitement and spittle were hissing through my teeth. The ducks must have heard because two of them angled off. But the two others probably thought it sounded like one of them because they kept gliding in.

They were in the middle of the decoys when their legs started dropping. Their feet had just touched the water when I elbowed Robbie. We stood, found the two almost motionless ducks in our sights and raked them with number sixes.(Number six shot?! With steel?! More on this later.)

They crumpled into the water amidst the shot patterns. One lay motionless the other started kicking in those little circles but with his head under. No need for another shot. Then two decoys right behind the downed ducks were tilting over. "Yeah, I know, we waited a little too long. But it's the first shots of the season. I get paranoid with this steel shot. I hate crippling them." The two decoys were almost under, and another one behind them was starting to tilt over.

"Robbie." I smirked. "We'll be pulling out the tube of liquid rubber tonight, and..." Then three greenwings suddenly blazed in and ended my monologue. Instinctively we shouldered the guns, then looked at each other. "Wait for them to lift son"-- "BLAAAM! Out two shots went off as one and two teal crumpled in mid-flight. We sat back down and got pensive while watching a flock of greys that were eyeing the decoys from 200 yards out.

Limit's came easily that opening morning last year--too easily. And our bag was mostly greys (gadwall, the coastal duck-hunters' "big duck") and teal.

Louisiana's brackish coastal marshes have traditionally wintered a good portion of this continent's gadwall--a species which year-in and year out, drought or no drought, seems to increase in numbers. When a brackish marsh duck-hunter talks about shooting "big-ducks" chances are he's talking about greys, and a few widgeon. Sure, there's mottled ducks (summer french) and a smattering of Mallards (winter french) in the brackish marshes but the greys and widgeon are usually more reliable.

And that's fine with me. For one thing we can make a limit of six of either. Secondly, they love to decoy, even to horrendous calling--though in heavily hunted areas greys get skittish quick. They especially wise up to permanent blinds.

The greys' and widgeons' diet has a lot to do with their preference for coastal marshes. Mallards and Pintail like grain and tubers and flock to flooded agricultural fields or shallow fresh marshes where wild millet, duck potato and three square grows.

Photo by Humberto Fontova

The marshes of upper Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Jefferson and Lafourche parishes are typical of the deep brackish type of marshes that pack in the greys every season.

Mallards also like flooded timber and cypress-tupelo swamps.

Widgeon and greys feed more on submerged aquatic vegetation--things like widgeon grass, millfoil and coontail. This is the stuff that often clogs the ponds and bayous in the deeper fresh to brackish marshes. Widgeon and greys also tend to prefer open water--big ponds and lagoons. And sadly, the ponds and lagoons in our coastal marshes are getting bigger every year. Try setting up on any point that juts out into the open, or island in the middle of it. Yes, chances are that most of the greys will exasperate you by circling, circling, circling-- then finally landing out of range in the open water. But usually just enough of them drift within range for limits. It's the law of averages. Even if just a small percentage of the greys decoy within range, by setting up where most of the ducks in the area want to land, you'll get enough spillover. We improve the odds by going out and spooking any big flocks that accumulate in the open water. Keeps the blood pumping on a cold day if nothing else.

Photo by Steve Price

The marshes of upper Plaquemines, St Bernard, Jefferson and Lafourche parishes are typical of the deep brackish type of marshes that pack in the greys every season. Pass-a-Loutre WMA and the Delta NWR at the mouth of the river hold flocks that sometimes blanket the bays.

It's easy to tell where these ducks are hanging out. Look for their feathers along the bank of ponds, they're white with grayish brown close to the tips. Greys like to strip the leaves off the stems of millfoil and coontail. Find a pond with a bunch of bare millfoil and coontail stems underwater and you've found a pond the greys are feeding in.

Both of these species tend to be gregarious--so the more decoys generally the better. And oh--about that six shot.

It was the last week-end of the season ten years ago we were out of shells. We'd hit every sporting goods store in the metropolitan area looking for steel shot and we were nearing hysteria. "Got any steel....."

"Nope, we been out for weeks. Try..."

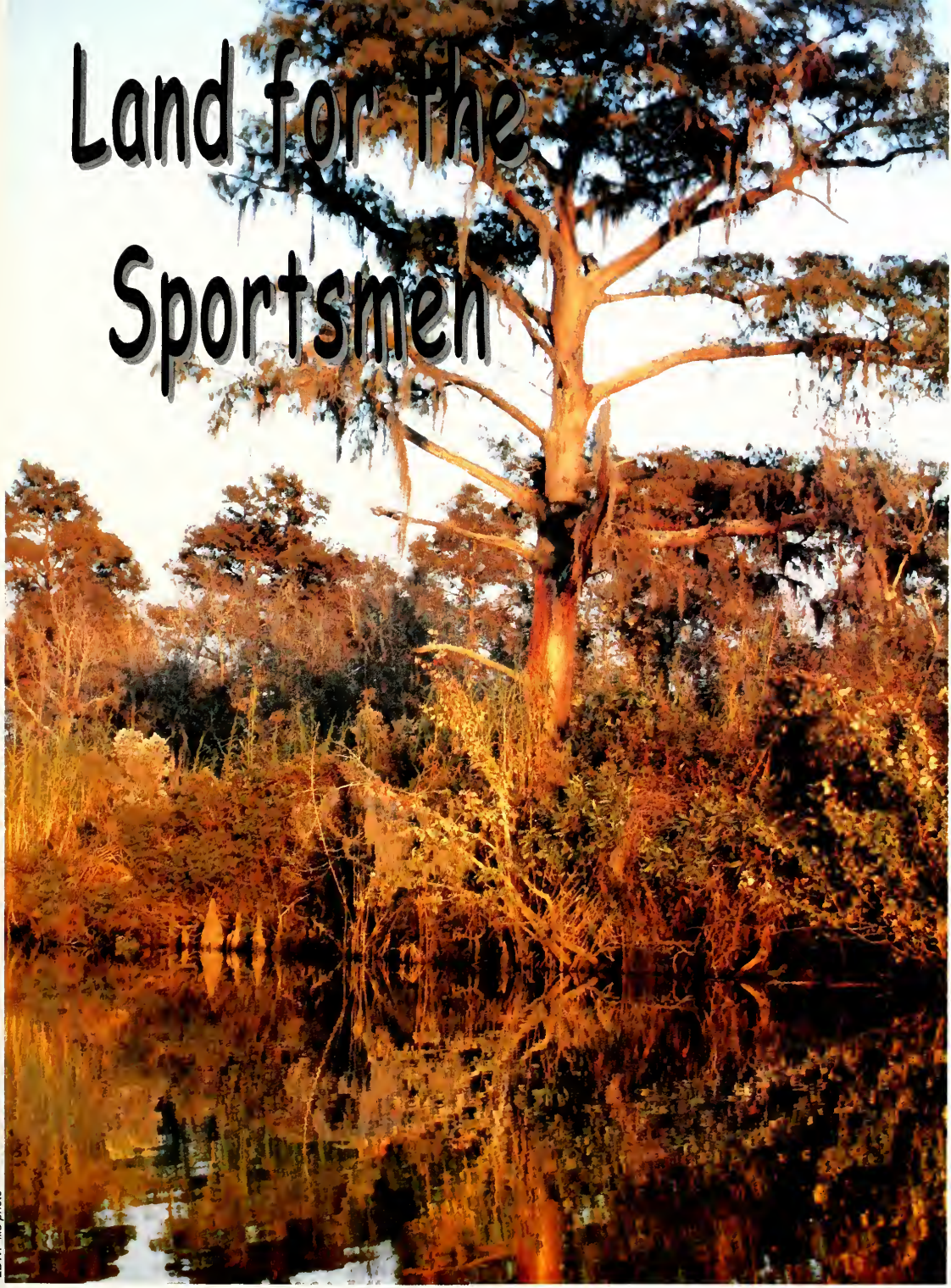
A convenience store saved the day for us. But all they had were sixes. Pelayo wasn't impressed: "You can barely kill ducks at ten yards with threes and fours!" he snorted, "these sixes are worthless! And look how much this guy wants for em!"

"Hey buddy, I'm trying to make a livin like everybody else. Take em or leave em!" The store owner bellowed from behind the register. "And hurry, I'm closing up!"

"I'm getting a box" I said in exasperation. Pelayo frowned and grabbed two boxes himself.

Not one duck escaped wounded the next morning. We dropped them like in the days of lead shot. We were both dumbfounded. Examining the ducks we found that most had been hit in the head and neck and most had at least one broken wing. Conclusion: the little sixes, since there are more of them, increases the chances of fatal head and neck hits--even if they carry less of a wallop. Since that day we've shot nothing but sixes.

Land for the Sportsmen



LDWF file photo

STORY BY THOMAS GRESHAM

Hunting a huge variety of game, freshwater or saltwater fishing and many other popular outdoor activities are available in every corner of Louisiana. In order to further the enjoyment of the public and to conserve those resources for which the state is famous, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has acquired many scenic Wildlife Management Areas and Refuges.

Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and refuges are invaluable resources for the conservation of game and other wildlife dependent upon the varied habitats that abound in Louisiana. WMAs offer plants and animals living within their boundaries a virtually undisturbed, healthy environment, free from the encroachment of agriculture and urban and industrial expansion. Wildlife are not the only beneficiaries of the management offered by WMAs. The bounty that flourishes within them is available to all Louisiana residents for hunting, trapping and fishing. Those who are interested in camping, boating, hiking or birdwatching are also welcome in all areas.

The Department now owns more than 675,000 acres and oversees the operation of almost as many acres which are owned by state, local and federal governments and private interests, such as timber companies. Now almost a century after the generous donation of one famous Louisiana resident, LDWF has jurisdiction over more than 1.3 million acres of land.

The story of land acquisition for the purpose of conservation in Louisiana began with one of the state's most famous historical figures. Eighty-seven years ago, E.A. McIlhenny of *Tabasco Sauce* fame was the first person to purchase land in one of Louisiana's natural areas with the express purpose of conserving the land and the wildlife living on it.

The events that lead up to his role as the father of Louisiana's land acquisition program began when McIlhenny saw the depletion in population of migrating birds near his home on Avery Island. He built a sanctuary, which he called a "Heronry," to provide a safe environment for birds. He wrote about his sanctuary, an artificial pond constructed in 1893 and about setting aside large areas of land where birds would have a safe sojourn on their way south. His experiments were met with remarkable success.

The experiments also gained him several admirers. Among them was Charles Ward of Michigan. A chance meeting of the two in a New Orleans sporting goods store sparked a friendship and partnership that would benefit the state of Louisiana for years to come.

Having bought some 54,000 acres on the south side of Vermillion Bay for their own use, McIlhenny and Ward decided to donate part of it for the use of others. That first 13,000 acre donation was offered to the state in the summer of 1911. The Board of

All wildlife management areas in Louisiana are open to hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation. They represent every habitat found in the state-coastal marshes, bottomland hardwoods, cypress tupelo swamps, mixed pine hardwoods, longleaf pine savannahs, upland hardwood forests, upland longleaf pine forests and shortleaf pine/oak/hickory forests.

Commissioners for the Protection of Birds, Game and Fish accepted the donation. The Louisiana State Wildlife Sanctuary, now a Refuge, stands today as a testament to the vision of the sportsman conservationist.

McIlhenny and Ward worked inexhaustibly for the next eight years gathering funds from sportsmen and conservationists alike. Of major significance was their work in encouraging the Russel Sage Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation to donate 166,000 acres to the state in the form of Marsh Island and Rockefeller Refuges. At first only temporary leases to the state were offered. McIlhenny himself convinced the Board of Commissioners from each foundation that total control of the areas should be given to Louisiana.

McIlhenny was responsible in part for acquiring 179,000 of the 1,340,118 acres, comprising 49 WMAs and seven refuges, now owned or operated by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. This land is managed for the dual purpose of conserving natural habitats for wildlife and providing public access. Before this century, when the minds of men like McIlhenny turned to the problems of depletion of natural resources, setting aside land for plants and animals was unheard of.

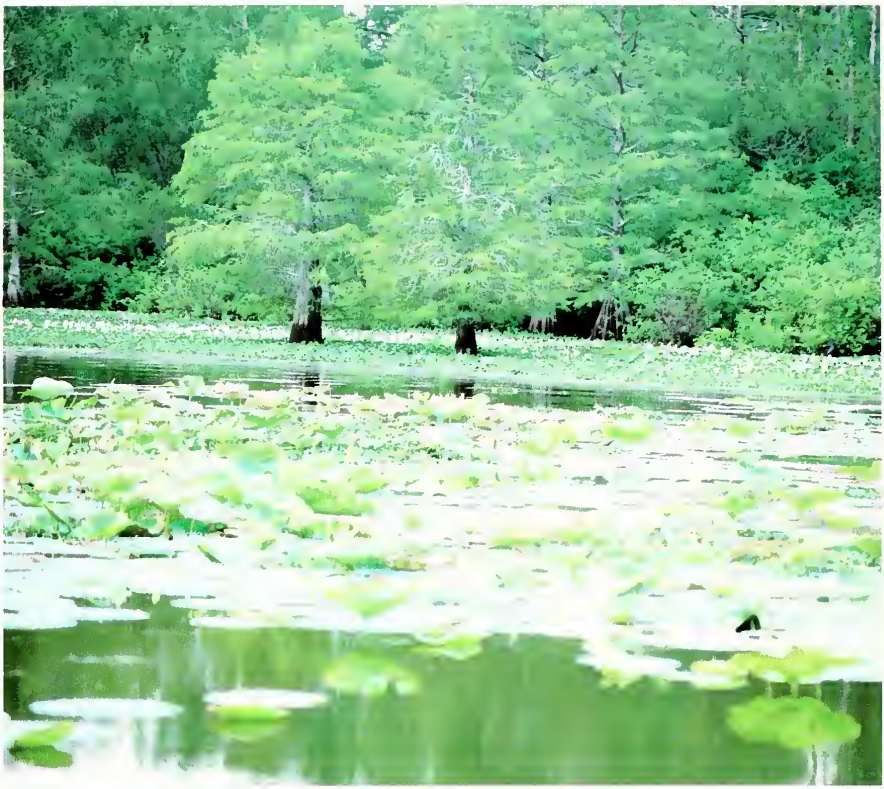
With McIlhenny's philanthropic deeds done, it was time for the State of Louisiana to begin its own search for land and funding for WMAs. Throughout the history of LDWF there have been only four people in charge of land acquisitions: Dewey Wills, for whom a WMA near Alexandria is named, Hugh Bateman and Tommy Prickett, who still work for the Department in other capacities and Robert Love, the current Land Acquisition Program Manager.

From the mid 1950s until the late 1970s, mineral rights on state land, fueled by the oil and gas "boom", funded massive purchases for WMAs. With revenue from existing WMAs bolstering the economy of the Department, LDWF felt confident in purchasing its first parcel of land in 1960. During the administration of Governor Jimmy Davis, LDWF acquired the 14,680 acre Russel Sage Wildlife Management Area for $440,000. Russel Sage was the first WMA purchased with state money. Over the next several years, the Department continued to acquire extensive areas of land. Big Lake,

Bodcau Wildlife Management Area has approximately 20,000 acres of bottomland hardwood which are flooded for a few months each year. Bottomland hardwood is one of Louisiana's most rich and varied habitats and is home to a variety of species of animals and plants.

Situated in southwest Louisiana, the 86,000 acre Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge is home to one of the world's foremost alligator research facilities. Here scientists study alligator management with world renowned experts.

One of the most important and successful programs of the LDWF has been the establishment and development of the wildlife management areas across the state.



Red River and Pomme de Terre are only a few of the WMAs made possible for the most part by natural resources income from other Refuges. Before the "oil bust" of the late 1970s, about $90 million in mineral revenues were reinvested in the purchase of land. Additional donations, acts of the Louisiana Legislature and free leases from timber corporations have contributed considerably to the land area operated by LDWF.

In 1991, the Department's headquarters building at 400 Royal Street in New Orleans transferred ownership from the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to the State Government. The building is now the courthouse for the Louisiana Supreme Court. As part of the agreement, $24 million was marked for LDWF enhancements, mostly land acquisitions. Some of the funding is still forthcoming!

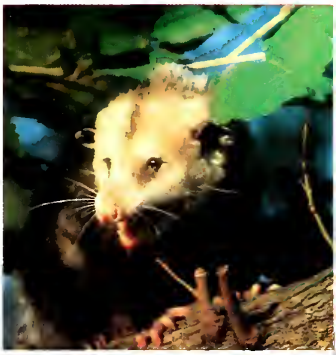
Just as plants and animals inside a WMA depend upon one another for survival, the land acquisitions section depends upon the support of Louisiana's hunters and anglers. "Most of the money we spend today on land comes from sportsmen," said Bob Love. Twenty-five percent of each hunting license and most of each Louisiana Duck Stamp sold, which totals about $800,000 a year, goes toward land acquisition. Recently, the addition of a Turkey Stamp has provided more funding. Even with limited funds the Department purchased over 40,000 acres in the last 10 years. Another nine thousand acres were donated to the Department during that time. Love said, "Throughout history, in the struggle for land use between man and wildlife, man has always won. The most notable exception is the fee title purchase of land by the Department and other bodies, with language expressed in the deed to conserve those natural areas for their wildlife."

Each battle won for wildlife is ultimately a victory for Louisiana sportsmen.

LOUISIANA NATURE INVESTIGATOR

ADAPTATION

BY LYLE SONIAT, Ph.D.



An adaptation is a favorable feature that enables an individual to survive and successfully reproduce in its particular surroundings. Not all animals of the same species adapt the same way. They develop different characteristics based on their environment. For example, opossums have hairless ears and tails. This adaptation helps them keep cool in a warm Louisiana climate. Opossums, however, can not live in the northern regions of the United States because their ears and tails would freeze. There are even subtle changes in the same adaptation within one species in response to varying environmental conditions such as ear and body size variations due to latitudinal temperature changes.

Adaptations can be a physical or behavioral feature of the animal. For example the shrike, a bird that catches mice, uses thorns and barbed wire to kill its prey and then stores the meat to soften until later. These behavioral adaptations compensate for the shrike's not having the sharp talons and beak necessary to kill and eat fresh meat. Adaptations are common in various features of plants and animals such as body shape, coloration, mouth parts and shape, and reproduction.

Body shape can help animals obtain food or escape being eaten. For example, swallows are small birds with long, pointed wings and great powers of flight. They are among the most graceful of all birds on the wing, wheeling and turning with ease in quest of their diet of insects. Fish have certain body shapes to help them move through the water. Trout and tuna are torpedo-shaped, which reduces the drag of the water and makes them faster.

Coloration plays an important role in survival and reproduction in plants and animals. For example, the flounder's coloration is a mottled brown to match the ocean floor. Flounders feed by partially concealing themselves with sand and then darting forth to capture prey that ventures too close. This type of coloration is called *camouflage*. Coloration can be used in other ways such as to advertise a warning. The skunk's coloration is a well known warning to humans and other animals as a sign to stay away or get sprayed. Coloration can be used to attract mates. Birds often show this adaptation. In spring, many of the males lose their drab winter feathers and grow breeding plumage. While this coloring makes them more likely to be eaten, females are often attracted to the most brightly colored males. Remember, the name of the game is not only survival, but also reproduction. The most brightly colored males that survive and mate pass on the genetic material for brightly colored feathers.

Mouth shaped and teeth (if the animal has any) often are adapted for the type of food the animal eats. Rabbits, like most animals that eat plants, have broad flat teeth for grinding plant matter, while the meat eaters such as coyotes have sharp slashing teeth for tearing flesh. Humans, because they eat both meat and plant material, have broad, flat teeth in the backs of their mouths for eating plants and canine teeth (the pointed teeth) near the front for eating meat.

Plants and animals have a wide variety of adaptations to help insure that offspring (babies) survive. For example after the eggs are hatched, the male yellow bullhead catfish herds the young in a tight school to protect them until they are capable of caring for themselves. However, many fish, insect and plant species are adapted to flood the environment with their young. Thousands of eggs are laid and then the young are left to survive as best they can. The parents invest little energy in caring for the young, but because of their sheer numbers, some will live to reproduce.

A new adaptation that helps an animal to survive will be passed on to the next generation. If the environment changes and if certain individuals in the population have the necessary features to survive then the species continues. An adaptation can develop from the natural variation within individuals. People think that all individuals within a species look alike however, there is considerable variation. Human individuals are short, tall, fat, skinny, light or dark and have different hair and eye color, but they are all humans. An adaptation can arise from this variation if it is in the genetic material and the environmental conditions change. For example, a small number of white alligators were born in Louisiana. (They can be seen in the Audubon Zoo or the Aquarium of the Americas in New Orleans.) Suppose their coloration is due to a genetic change. With their white coloration, they would not survive because against the natural vegetation they are easily spotted as food by animals. If for some unknown reason environmental conditions changed and plants were white, the usual green-colored alligators would not survive to adulthood to breed. However, the white alligators would escape being eaten, and live to breed. Soon Louisiana would be filled with white alligators. However, if the vegetation turned orange, since no individual in the alligator population is born with orange coloration, alligators might become extinct.

Fortunately dramatic changes in the environment are rare. Change happens slowly over thousands of years. Most plants and animals have enough genetic variation to adapt to gradual changes. However, with growing human populations, global environmental change is happening faster and is more widespread. Destruction of natural areas and pollution of the air, water and land are resulting in faster and more numerous changes in the environment. With the environment changing rapidly, potentially successful genetic variations may not have time to spread through the species. Therefore, many species may become extinct.

ACTIVITY

From the following list of parts, create a make-believe bird by selecting and combining various parts of birds. After your bird is completed, draw a picture of it using the parts you have selected and give it a name.

1. LEGS-short, medium, or long.
2.WINGS-broad, narrow, or small.
3. BEAK-long and narrow, short and narrow, or hook like.
4. FEET- hooked talons, grasping, or webbed.

Now answer the following questions:
1. Where does your bird live? Describe the plants and terrain.
2. What does your bird eat? Describe the adaptations that enable it to eat this food.
3. Will the shape of its bill allow it to eat this food?
4. How does it catch or gather its food?
5. How does it protect or defend itself?

Birds are a good species to observe when looking for different types of adaptations. Some birds look for their food while soaring on the winds, while others hop along the ground. Still others dive into the water to obtain their food. Each of these types of feeding requirements has resulted in a specialized adaptation that the bird has found to be successful in food gathering.

Find and observe five different kinds of birds. What kind of beaks does each have? What type of food does each one eat? Does each bird depend more on its wings or its legs to catch its food? Differences in wing style and type of beak are physical adaptations. Watch a single bird for at least ten minutes. See if you can observe any behavioral adaptations. Some behavioral adaptations include:

1. a mockingbird flaring its wings to scare up bugs,
2. egrets remaining motionless while they wait for passing minnows,
3. kildeer pretending to have an injured wing to lure predators away from the nest.

GO WILD in the CLASSROOM

is an opportunity for individuals, companies and organizations to donate a four year subscription of the *Louisiana Conservationist* to the school or classroom of their choice for only $30, tax deductible.

An invaluable teaching tool, the *Louisiana Conservationist* will challenge students to explore Louisiana's abundant natural resources and outdoor recreation.

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WC

LAW LINES

Behind the Badge

BY MAJ. KEITH LACAZE

NEW SEASONS/NEW HUNTERS

Season dates and bag limits for the 1998-99 dove season were adopted at the July regular monthly meeting of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission. The dates are Sept. 5-13, Oct. 17-Nov. 6 and Dec. 12- Jan. 10; daily bag limit 15, possession limit 30. Shooting hours are one half-hour before sunrise to sunset except for Sept. 5-6, Oct. 17-18 and Dec. 12-13 when shooting hours are noon to sunset.

The September segment of the dove season is the first gun season in the state. Dove hunts are popular social events with high hunter participation. Shooting over a dove field is unique in that it offers the number one challenge in shotgun marksmanship while providing the opportunity for everyone to get in on the action. Easy access to most fields along with little need for concealment or quiet make dove hunting a particularly good experience for children and novice hunters.

But dove hunting demands a high degree of safety awareness. A situation where multiple gunners are shooting in close proximity to one another requires careful planning and coordination. Young and inexperienced hunters need careful guidance for the safety of themselves and others.

A well-planned hunt involves positioning hunters in a pattern that offers no chance of crossfire or downrange situations. On small fields, placing all hunters on a firing line along one side or boundary of the field works extremely well. Shots can be fired at birds entering the field from any direction and everyone gets a shot at doves brave enough to run the gauntlet of the shooting line. It is amazing how many birds survive the trip unscathed. Firing at low flyers traveling between hunters on the firing line must be avoided due to the threat of crossfire.

On larger fields, hunters should be widely spaced and all shots at low flyers should be avoided. Positioning can be easily adjusted if a hazardous situation becomes apparent. Fine shot can be lethal at close range and at greater distances it can still cause injury, especially to the eyes. Good quality shooting glasses are a must for eye protection from possible debris from the hunter's own gun and from stray shot.

Many young hunters accompany dad or some other more experienced hunter on dove hunts. The seasoned hunter assumes the role of instructor with the enormous responsibility of teaching gun safety, ethical hunter conduct and sportsmanship. Make the outing a pleasant learning experience for the youngster by taking time to explain each phase of the hunt and allowing active participation. Many children who are still too young to shoot get a big thrill out of simply retrieving downed birds and carrying the game from the field. At the same time they are learning the ethical concept of making every effort to recover dead or wounded birds.

It may be necessary to shorten the length of the hunt so a young hunter doesn't lose interest or become overly tired. Weather on September hunts is almost always hot. A cooler with water, soft drinks and snacks will keep the young hunter comfortable and occupied during slack times when birds are not moving. It is also handy for keeping harvested birds cool to avoid spoilage.

Beginners will need some coaching in order to hit fast moving doves. Throwing some clay birds for practice before the hunt is a great idea. It will also give dad time to be sure his young hunter can handle the shotgun and is not "over gunned."

Attending a Hunter Education course together before the hunting season is recommended for any parent-child hunting team. Safety, ethics, regulations and other hunting related topics are covered in the course and "youth model" shotguns are provided during the clay bird-shooting phase. The course is the ideal refresher for experienced hunters and is required by law for all youngsters buying their first hunting license.

Whether on a dove field in early September, in the hardwoods looking for squirrels or in deer or duck camp, bringing a young person into the hunting fraternity is one of the finest things a hunter can do for wildlife. Future generations will determine the fate of our wildlife resources. The steady decline in the number of hunters must be reversed if wildlife species are to continue to benefit from protection and management funded by the sportsman's dollar.

Perhaps equally important is the benefit we derive from the special bond created between parent and child who share the best experience of all, the great outdoors.

Lt. Joey Broussard instructs Melissa Morrison in the proper usage of firearms. Anyone born on or after September 1, 1969 must have proof of satisfactorily completing a Hunter Certification Course approved by the LDWF in order to legally buy a hunting license

notes CONSERVATION

First HOOT Camps are Fun and Educational

The LDWF offered four week-long HOOT (Hands on Outdoor Training) camps for 72 middle school students this summer. The camps were held at the Information & Education Division's environmental education center near Alexandria.

The program was formulated by LDWF education staff working with science educators throughout the state to link specific environmental concepts to outdoor skills. Hands-on, inquiry-based environmental education activities were used to teach the campers about biodiversity, abiotic components of the ecosystem, adaptations and water quality. The campers also participated in a variety of outdoor skill activities: rifle and shotgun shooting, archery, fishing, canoeing, camping and cooking.

HOOT camps will be offered again next summer for boy and girls entering seventh and eighth grades.

Plan Now for Next Year's Backyard Wildlife

According to the LDFW's' Urban Wildlife Program, now is the time to plan for next year's backyard habitat. People are tending their gardens now so it's a perfect time to look at what plants you have and decide where to make changes.to attract even more wildlife next year.

Although winter is the best time to plant trees and shrubs, it's not always easy to find the plants you want during this time of year, much less see them in full bloom or foliage. Trees and shrubs can be bought in the summertime and early fall, kept in containers and transplanted during cooler months. As long as you keep potted plants well watered, they should survive. Late summer is also a good time to find bargains.

Developing a backyard habitat is not something that you can do in one weekend, there are lots of things to consider. Looking for ideas now gives you time to develop an effective plan for next year's landscape. There are also things other than plants to consider, like putting in a backyard pond or water garden.

If your garden club or civic organization would like a presentation on developing backyard habitats, contact LDWF Urban Biologist, James Ernst at 504/763-3557. For more information on developing backyard wildlife habitats, write to: LDWF Urban Wildlife Program, P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, LA 70898.

New Brochures Available from Louisiana Sea Grant

As part of Louisiana Sea Grant's non-indigenous nuisance species outreach efforts, two new brochures have been produced for Gulf of Mexico region-wide distribution. *Water Garden* and *Aquarium Hobbyists* are intended for members of aquarium and water garden associations, clubs, retail outlets and wholesalers. These brochures promote the use of native species and stress the importance of careful disposal of non-natives.

To obtain copies, contact Marilyn Barrett-O'Leary at 504/388-6349.

Clouds Bring Rain and Fish Kills for Louisiana

Although the end of recent drought conditions comes as a relief to many, the outlook for Louisiana's fisheries may not be so bright. With cloudy skies, thunderstorms and continuing hot weather, conditions are perfect for fish kills. Already several incidents have been reported.

Generally, fish kills occur in small ponds but if the conditions are right, instances may occur in larger water bodies. Prolonged periods of cloudy weather and high temperatures culminate in a sub-surface condition which in some cases may be deadly to fish.

With greater oxygen requirements, larger fish die first. Smaller fish may survive longer as they can obtain oxygen from the interface between the air and water more effectively.

In addition, hot weather can trigger thunder storms which can exacerbate the problem. Cooler rain water sinks through the warmer water of the lake to the bottom causing an inversion of the water column. Oxygen deficient water below the thermocline rises, reducing the oxygen content of water above. This movement of water may also cause decaying organic material to rise and take oxygen from higher water levels. In this case, fish kills can occur quickly.

Although fish kills may seem disastrous, they are a common phenomenon during Louisiana's summer months. Fish populations may recover without any long-term damage, but in some cases supplemental stocking is required. Fish kills should be reported to LDWF district fisheries biologists.

Net the Big One On-Line

The Louisiana State Fish Records as documented and kept by the Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association are now available on the internet. Users may access the records by following a link posted on the LDWF home page at http://www.wlf.state.la.us.

The site documents state records in the categories of freshwater/saltwater rod and reel and freshwater/saltwater fly fishing. There is also a section documenting pond records, although these fish are not eligible for state record verification.

Louisiana State Fish Record applications for all categories are also available from the site and can be accessed by clicking the appropriate links. All records are current as of 7/20/98 and will be updated periodically.

notes CONSERVATION

Commission Adopts Trip Ticket

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission adopted a rule implementing a commercial fisherman's sales card and dealer receipt form effective January 1, 1999. This action was taken at the Commission's regular monthly meeting in Baton Rouge, Aug. 6, 1998.

Dealer receipt forms, commonly known as trip tickets are designed to collect harvest data by trip from wholesale/retail dealers that purchase seafood from commercial fishermen. The trip ticket program, announced to the public by a notice of intent in April, 1998, replaces the state's current program of monthly dealer reports and will significantly improve the data used by the Department to conduct fish stock assessments.

The Wildlife and Fisheries Commission was given the authority by the Louisiana legislature in 1990 to design and establish dealer receipt forms. Legislation was passed in 1997 to fully fund the program.

Under the new rule, the commercial fisherman's sales card will be presented by the commercial fisherman to the dealer at the time of sale or transfer of possession of the catch. Dealers will complete the dealer receipt form after receiving or purchasing fish from a commercial fisherman. The dealer's copy of the receipt will be maintained on file for a three year period at the dealer's place of business or where the fish are received. The department copy of the form will be returned to the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries on the 10th of every month to include purchases made during the previous month. All records and receipt forms will be available and produced on demand to any authorized agent of the LDWF Enforcement Division or Department auditor.

Bear Seen as Tool in Habitat Restoration

Since the 1992 listing of the Louisiana black bear under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act there has been a coordinated effort to develop a habitat restoration mechanism that addresses connectivity and reduces fragmentation of existing bottomland hardwood habitat. Most outdoors enthusiasts in Louisiana are aware of ongoing efforts to restore forested habitat in areas of marginal or non-productive agricultural land. These programs have already been responsible for the planting of trees on over 200,000 acres in Louisiana.

While both the LDWF and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are focusing their efforts on replanting agency owned lands, several other initiatives encourage the reforestation of private property in Louisiana. There are federal programs administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Services Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as well as other state programs administered by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry that provide financial incentives to private landowners to manage for trees and/or wildlife.

In the past, wildlife managers viewed bears as a species that was difficult to manage because of their potential for generating conflicts, requirement of expansive habitat and low reproductive potential. But from the current habitat restoration perspective, bears have great value. Their requirement for large areas to meet their needs affords managers an opportunity to look at the "big picture" and address issues that cross parish lines, ownerships, political jurisdictions, and physical barriers.

Components of good bear habitat are escape cover, dispersal corridors, abundant and diverse natural foods, water, and den sites. Because bears are adaptable habitat generalists, a variety of habitat types are readily utilized by bears. There is much more flexibility in managing for bears than with many other species. Therefore, using the bear as the species on which to focus enables managers to address the needs of other desirable species on a much larger scale.

Using the bear as a management tool can help coordinate management efforts among multiple landowners. Because of the large home ranges of bears, suitable habitat often can not be maintained on any one ownership. Ongoing efforts incorporate a voluntary approach whereby various landowners and user groups work together to promote bear management over a large area.

Successful management at this level is dependent on mutual cooperation and partnerships among landowners. Resource managers and landowners are beginning to recognize that this coordinated management approach may offer the best opportunity for restoration of habitat in the region. Communication among personnel from a variety of agencies helps pool resources that can give a much greater return for limited available dollars.

Becoming an Outdoor Woman

Having fun while learning about the great outdoors is the goal when LDWF hosts its eighth *Becoming an Outdoors Woman* seminar September 18 -20 at Camp Grant Walker near Alexandria.

Outdoors Woman participants receive professional instruction and hands-on experience in their choice of more than 20 workshops. Activities include firearm use and safety, outdoor photography, map and compass reading, camping, fly-fishing, archery, rifle markswomenship, canoeing, birdwatching and falconry.

Sara Benoit, assistant coordinator of the program, recently received a letter from a participant expressing

her appreciation of the program and how it had broadened and enriched her life.

The following is an excerpt from the participant's letter. "On June 9th, I set out on an exciting camping trip to Colorado and Utah. As you know I am severely hearing impaired and because of this my family has always been very reluctant to let me go out alone, but because of *Becoming an Outdoor Woman* I learned so much that I proved to everyone that I could do many things for myself. I mastered the handling of a travel trailer and cooking out in the wilderness. Believe me, I felt very confident in traveling alone and being outdoors with nature because I learned so much from your programs. It was exciting! I thank the LDWF for giving me the chance to learn things that made outdoor life so easy to enjoy."

Becoming an Outdoor Woman is sponsored by the Information and Education Division of LDWF.

Hunter Safety Education Courses Offered Statewide

Course schedules and locations for LDWF's free of charge Hunter Safety Education courses are available by calling 504/765-2932.

Be Hip— Do It for the Birds

Do you hunt ducks, geese, doves, woodcock, rails, snipe, coots or gallinules in Louisiana? If you do and you purchased your hunting license after June 1, 1998, you must become part of the Harvest Information Program (HIP). All resident, non-resident and lifetime license holders must be HIP certified. The LDWF also encourages all senior citizens and youth under 16 to participate in this program.

The process is simple. All that's required is that you answer a few questions about your hunting season's success.

A mandatory program, HIP will provide accurate data that will enable the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to better manage resources.

Electronic Licenses a Convenience for Bird Hunters

Louisiana's migratory bird hunters will soon have a quick, convenient way to buy licenses. By late fall the LDWF plans to implement an electronic system, similar to those found in Texas and Missouri, which will reduce the time it takes to apply for licenses.

With the new system online, hunters will have 90 percent one-stop shopping. Each hunting privilege and stamp, except the federal duck stamp can be embossed on the license receipt at the time of purchase explained LDWF Program Manager Craig Lamendola.

Although not yet available, the Department plans to further enhance the system with the addition of a toll-free phone line accesible 24 hours a day, seven days a week upon which hunters may purchase licenses by credit card.

LCM Helps Find Kids

Missing: Colin Thompson. DOB: 3/8/80. Missing from Minot, ND. Sex: male.Race: white. Height: 6'3". Hair: black.Eyes: brown. Anyone knowing the whereabouts of this child should call the Minot Police Dept. at 1/701-8520111 or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 800/843-5678.

Beginner and gourmet outdoor cooking are two of the most popular seminars offered as part of the *Becoming an Outdoor Woman* program.

COMMENTS *Cont'd from page 2*

activities through education, and through firm, fair and impartial law enforcement. The activities of this and every other program must be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with its stated mission. But remember our four questions? Number two was "where do we want to be?" To answer this we have to set Goals and Objectives. Let's look at one particular goal of this program:

GOAL II.: "Provide a safer boating, fishing and hunting environment for maximum conservation and enjoyment of the state's waterways, fish and wildlife." This goal is consistent with the mission to protect resources and provide a secure environment. There are several objectives defined to clearly establish when we've reached our goal. One is:

OBJECTIVE II.1: "By June 30, 2003 the Enforcement Program will reduce boating accidents in the state by 2%." This is a clear statement of what the Department intends to accomplish for the people of Louisiana.

Remember question number three: "How do we get where we want to be?" To answer this Strategies have been developed. One strategy is:

STRATEGY II.1.2.: " Identify the geographic locations with high use for boating activity." This is something that we can work at doing. It will take some effort, but we know why we need to do it, and we can do it.

Hopefully, this example helps to illustrate what Strategic Planning is doing for the Department and for the people of our state. This process will help this Department and all other areas of state government to keep "in focus" and to use the state's resources effectively.

LOUISIANA'S NATIONAL HUNTING AND FISHING DAY

14th Annual

Participation Activities
(instructors present)
canoeing
fishing clinic
shooting (BB,muzzleloading, skeet)
archery target shooting
duck & goose calling
duck calling contest
boating education

Free Coca-cola provided
hotdogs available
Bring lawnchairs
Absolutely no alcoholic beverages allowed.

Statewide Locations
- Baton Rouge 504/765-2925
- Minden 318/371-3050
- Monroe 318/3434044
- Natchitoches 318/487-5885

Saturday, September 26, 1998
9 a.m. until 3 p.m.
Waddill Refuge

Free Admission!

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LSU Sea Grant Litter Program
Game Management & Research
Dept. of Natural Resources
Coastal Restoration
Nature Conservancy
Artificial Reef Program
La. Natural Freshwater Catfish Association
Audubon Society
Live birds of prey, turtles, alligators!

(Activities will vary by location)

Award Winning

Demonstrations
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Fly casting
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Falconry

Kids' Fishing Contest
Bait furnished, limited poles available.

Purchase boat registrations, hunting and fishing licenses.

Free samples of Louisiana game and seafood dishes at tasting booths.

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Bayou Kitchen

Dove a la Plaquemine

14 to 16 doves
1 clove garlic (chopped)
4 ribs celery (chopped)
5 medium onions (chopped)
4 shallots(chopped)
1/2 bunch parsley (chopped)
1 bay leaf
1 can consomme
2 sticks butter
7 slices bacon
2 large cans mushrooms (with juice)
Salt, pepper
cayenne pepper (coarsely ground)
Gravy flour

Put the following into a large pot: chopped celery, onions, garlic, shallots, parsley and two sticks of butter. While ingredients are simmering over low fire, salt, pepper, and cayenne the doves. Stuff each dove with 1/2 slice of bacon. Place doves in pot. Add both cans of mushrooms with juice, the can of consomme and bay leaf. Cover and cook on a low fire for 1 3/4 hours. Additional seasoning may be added as desired. Remove cover and thicken gravy with flour. Serve over wild rice.

A Brace of Gadwalls

After your ducks are cleaned and picked rub outside with lemon and stuff with onion and celery overnight in the refrigerator. When ready to cook, remove stuffing. Pour lemon juice and red wine into duck cavity. Rub outside of duck with butter and stuff ducks with orange segments and pecans.

Roast in a preheated oven two hours at four hundred degrees, basting often with a liquid of chicken stock or bouillon. Garnish with sliced oranges.

Brunswick Stew

It is so versatile it can be made with rabbit, squirrel, raccoon or venison.

3lbs. of squirrel, etc.
11/2 tablespoons salt
1/2 cup chopped onions
2 tablespoons brown sugar
1 cup peeled cut-up potatoes
1 can tomatoes
1 can whole kernel corn
1 can lima beans
6 whole cloves
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Place meat in a large soup pot with just enough water to cover. Add salt, onions, brown sugar and potatoes. Cover and simmer for about 2 hours or until the meat is very tender. Add water if necessary. Skim off all fat. Add tomatoes, corn, lima beans, cloves and cayenne pepper. Simmer until the stew is very hot and serve.

Recipes and photograph taken from The Official Louisiana Seafood and Wild Game Cookbook